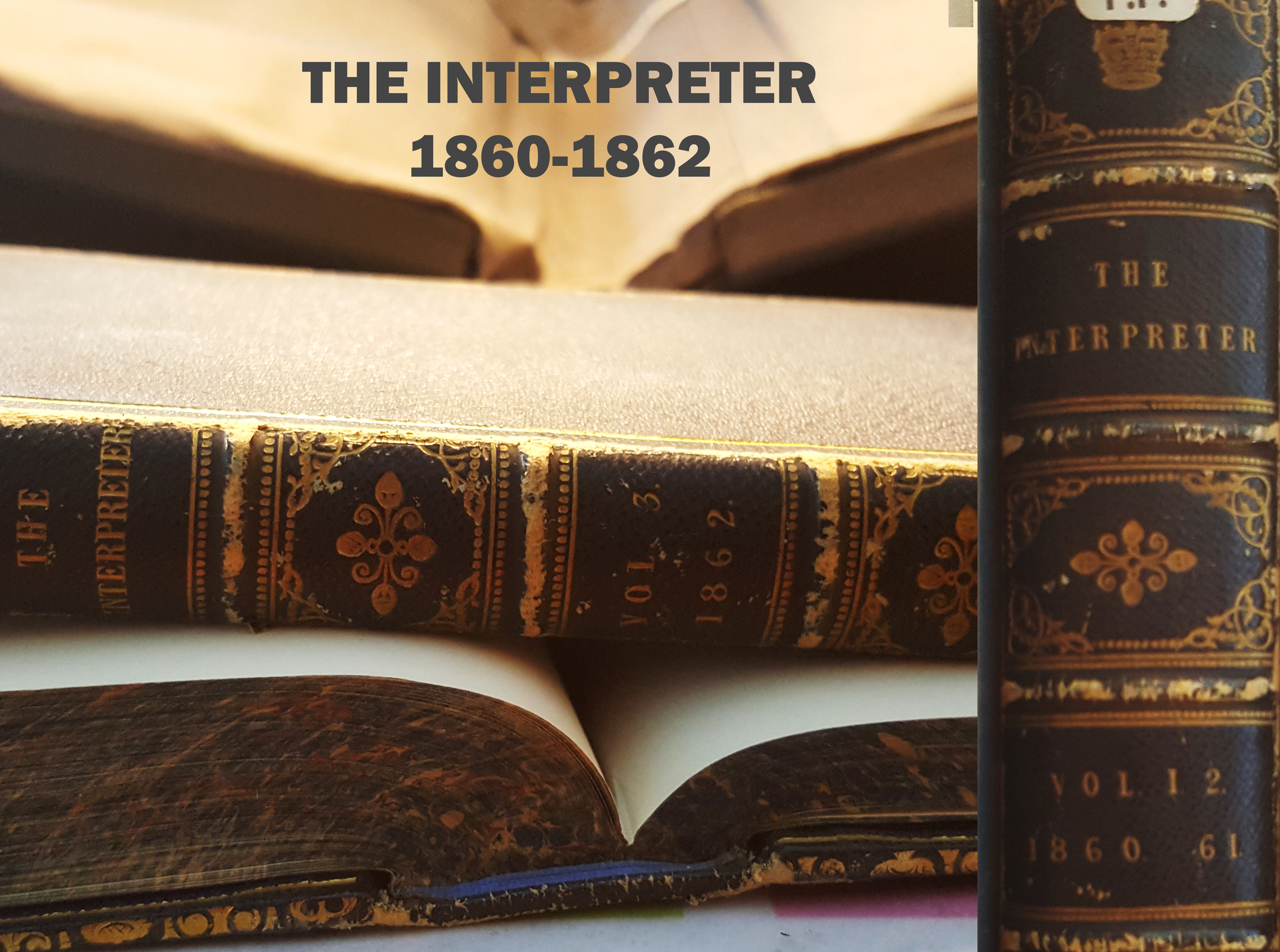
THE INTERPRETER
1860-1862



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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at,—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints, as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine.*

PRIVATE JUDGMENT.

THE right of Private Judgment in matters of Religion is justly regarded by Protestants as a most precious inheritance.

Yet it cannot be denied that the exercise of the right has sometimes been fearfully injurious to those who have enjoyed it, and not unfrequently proved an occasion of stumbling, by multiplying sects and heresies.

For this reason, or rather on this pretext, it has

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been maintained by many that, in the search after Divine Truth, the guidance of the reason and the understanding should be abandoned; and that, since the path of humility is the path of safety, it is the part of wisdom to accept without question, at the hands of the Church's appointed ministers, those doctrines which, it is assumed, God has committed to her charge, alike for the temporal benefit and eternal salvation of mankind.

This view of the supposed duty of a Christian man is, by the church of Rome, as every one knows, openly held, and unblushingly defended. By Protestants it is professedly repudiated; but there can be no question that, with various modifications, it is maintained in one form or other by almost all Christian communities who attach vital importance to particular forms of religious thought.

To the Romanist it has generally been deemed sufficient to reply, that any such attempted transference of responsibility, in relation to the discovery of Truth, can, after all, only be accomplished by and through an act of Private Judgment; for if a man, from whatever motive, resolves to abandon *his own* judgment in relation either to truth or duty, and to place himself without reserve in the hands of others, he is surely as responsible for the wisdom or folly of that resolution, and for all the consequences to which it may lead, as he can be for any other choice or decision.

On Protestants, who often unconsciously adopt Romanist principles, in consequence of their dread of

doubt, their love of system, or their deference to the authority either of dead "Fathers" or living "Brethren," it seems necessary to urge other considerations, not less important, although very frequently forgotten.

And the first is this,—that the dangers and evils, which arise from free thought in matters of religion, do not differ in the least from those which arise from any other exercise of that liberty which is essential to a state of probation, and without which it could not exist. Man, we may rest assured, has not been placed in a world like this, and surrounded by temptations of every kind, without some good reason,—a reason consonant, without doubt, with the highest wisdom and love. The great end of his being unquestionably is, that he may learn, by Divine Grace, to choose the good and to reject the evil, to abandon the false and to cling to the true, "to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever." But how, it may well be asked, can this be done, unless he is at perfect liberty to inquire freely, to search diligently, and to adopt, in all honesty and integrity, whatever he believes to be the good and the true?

A second consideration, also generally disregarded, is, that the acceptance on authority of any doctrine, true or false, is not equivalent to faith in that doctrine, but *quite a different thing*. Faith is not mere *assent* to Truth, but something much higher. It is the reception of it *for a reason*, and a reason powerful enough to command submission; it supposes a conviction of truth so deep and profound, that the persuasion

of it becomes, in extreme cases, the ground and justification of martyrdom.

But this of course presupposes, *in all minds capable of inquiry*, honest and careful examination. I say in all minds capable of inquiry, because, to the very ignorant, to peasants, to slaves, and to children, this conviction of the understanding, in relation to *vital* truths at least, is often superseded by the workings of that spiritual instinct, which is the direct gift of God to the renewed soul, and which is called by St. John, "the unction of the Holy One." In the power of this gift, the illiterate possessor is said to "know all things;" by which is clearly meant, all things necessary to the soul's life and growth.

For intelligent men to shrink from the investigation of truth of any kind, however specious may be the pretext, whether it be called indolence or timidity, or whether it be baptized by the Christian name of humility, is, in fact, to evade the most important part of their moral discipline, and to render the complete development and perfection of human character impossible; for humility, patience, candour, and charity, find very little scope for exercise in the mind of any man who accepts his opinions on the authority of a party, or holds them for any other reason than that they are supported by evidence.

Two things undoubtedly tend to make men prefer half convictions to entire ones, and adherence to a party to personal and independent inquiry. The *one* is the extreme difficulty,—the pain and labour, the

weariness and exhaustion, which often attends honest researches. The *other* is, the *imperial demand* which truth, thus sought, makes upon a man for submission when it is attained.

So long as a man is only half convinced, so long as he is simply yielding to the views of others, he can easily evade the consequences of his admission, and if they involve anything very self-denying or disagreeable, easily *put off* his obedience to a more convenient season. But if, after long and anxious investigation, he has arrived at the conclusion that what he professes to have received as Divine is absolutely and eternally true, he has no choice between submission and misery; for if truth, thus received, be not a sovereign good to man, its possession must be a source of constant wretchedness.

In our own day, Christian men shrink from independent investigation, chiefly because they think it *inexpedient*. Certain forms of thought, right or wrong, have, it is said, for generations been regarded as "worthy of all acceptation;" under these forms men have received spiritual blessings of the highest value; in the belief of them they have lived well, and died happily. Why unsettle such landmarks?

The only answer that can be made to such a remonstrance is this,—The forms of thought, of which you speak, are either true or false. If true, inquiry will only strengthen their hold on men, and lead to their being still more generally supported and honoured. But if, from whatever cause, the suspicion has arisen

that they are, after all, only *partially* true,—that they are, at the best, only one-sided exhibitions of truth, that they involve fallacies, or that they produce exaggerated, and therefore inaccurate, impressions, they must on no account be shielded from examination; for whatever may be the supposed value of any form of thought, if it involve error, the support of it, or, which is the same thing, the determination not to undeceive those who hold it, is in the eye of God an immoral procedure. The exercise of integrity in this matter may be a sore trial to Faith, but we may rely upon it, obedience will in the end bring with it its own "exceeding great reward."

But finally it is said, Why fall back thus on reason and understanding? How is it possible for man, in his lost estate, to find Divine Truth at all? Is it not written, "The natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned"?

The answer is at hand—"My sheep," says Christ, "know my voice;" or, as He expressed the same thought before Pilate, "He that is *of the truth* heareth my words." The natural man cannot indeed discern spiritual truth, but it is only because, and *in proportion as*, he is not of the truth; his inability to discern it being in exact proportion to the degree in which he loves falsehood better than truth, and darkness better than light. A tyrannical despot cannot discern either the justice or expediency of constitutional liberty,—a proud man can see no beauty in humility that he

should desire it,—a churl no charm in liberality: but who pretends that all or any of these persons are excusable, or that any of them may justly affirm that his incapacity to discern the good, the true, or the beautiful, is his misfortune, and not his fault?

The truth is, *all the difficulties and dangers that attend upon the exercise of Private Judgment are specially provided for by Him who has thrown upon us the responsibility of its exercise.*

Not, indeed, as some would tell us, by the residence upon earth either of an Individual or a Corporation, who, as Christ's Vicar, can solve all difficulties and prove an infallible guide; not, indeed, by the bodily presence of Christ himself as an abiding court of appeal; but, by what is far better, the presence and guidance of His Holy Spirit in the hearts of all who desire Him.

And for what ends is He thus willing to abide amongst us? To strengthen the natural powers,—to illuminate the intellect,—to place the sage and the simpleton on the same platform,—to do *in reality* what the Roman Pontiff only pretends to do,—to solve all doubts, to make us infallible in our decisions, to render it impossible that we should go wrong in our pursuit after truth? CERTAINLY NOT.

Such a gift would in no important sense differ from Inspiration, and *if imparted generally*, would as completely destroy the character of our probation as that indolent reliance on human authority of which we complain. The only difference would be, that, in the

one case, infallibility would be a reality, in the other it is a delusion.

Far otherwise is the intent and end of God's great gift; for it annihilates no distinctions, it supersedes no effort, it counteracts no weakness that is merely intellectual. It is, from first to last, an action on the heart. Under its blessed influence pride departs, prejudice gives way, and selfish passions, in all their endless variety, are weakened and subdued. But it does no more. It leaves us still to search after evidence, to balance probabilities, to be misled if we permit the old enemy to becloud our faculties. For the rest, God has adapted the human intellect to truth, just as surely as He has adapted the eye to outward Nature; and, in either case, we see *truly*, only in proportion as by His mighty power films are removed, and the organ of vision purged and purified from *unnatural* defilement. A.

INTERPRETATIONS—No. 1.

Matt. xi. 12, "*And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence*" (*marg.*, is gotten by force), "*and the violent*" (*marg.*, they that thrust men) "*take it by force.*"

Commentators.—"Suffereth violence,"—"Is attacked by violence, like a besieged city; men of all sorts are pressing to get into it, and the violent seize it with eagerness."—*Doddridge.* So also *Watson.* "Multitudes press in to it, especially publicans and harlots."—*Matt. Henry.* "Men of ardent minds (*θιασται*) forcibly seize it."—*Chrys.*

and *Whitby*, quoted by *Bloomfield*. Mr. Alford has a lengthened note on the passage, but he does not materially differ from the foregoing.

We submit whether the true interpretation is not this,—From the time of the appearance of the Forerunner, until the time when our Lord was speaking (and, indeed, long after), entrance into the kingdom of the Messiah could only be effected violently or lawlessly, *i.e., in spite of* legal authority,—that of the Jewish rulers. Those only who were thus lawless (properly and righteously so) entered in; and they did so by forcibly setting aside, alike the commandment of the scribes and Pharisees and the traditions of the elders. *Until* John came, this would not have been a right course, for "all the prophets and the law prophesied until John," and *constituted authority* demanded obedience; but he, coming in the spirit and power of Elias, had placed man under higher authority, and so justified their disobedience to the old rulers.

Periods,—like that of which we speak,—when God himself sanctions contempt for what was once a rightful object of honour, occur from time to time. Such a period was that when Hezekiah "brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made" (2 Kings xviii. 4), calling it *nehushtan*, a mere piece of brass. Such a period was that of our Lord's first advent. Such a period was the Reformation from Popery; and such a period will probably come again, whenever it shall appear that "Church Principles," ecclesiastical authority, sectarian "interests," or anything else, stands in the way of that purification of the Church, which, sooner or later, *must* come. Then will it again be said, "*The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.*"

L.

THE MINISTER.

COUNT AGÉNOR DE GASPARIN AND DR. MERLE D'AUBIGNÉ.

Chapter I.—The Controversy.

THE Minister,—Is his office of God, or of man? That is, in fact, the point at issue between the two eminent writers whose names stand at the commencement of this paper.

The discussion has a *history*. We propose briefly to sketch it.

The awakening of spiritual life among the Protestants of France and Switzerland has, it appears, for some years past led to investigations among devout men, concerning the original constitution of the Church of Christ. These investigations, as might naturally have been expected, have not always issued in a persuasion that the Presbyterianism which generally prevails in the continental churches is of apostolic authority. Some, indeed, have openly avowed their dissatisfaction with its ecclesiastical forms, and, refusing to be fettered by usages imposed on them at the Reformation, have felt themselves at liberty to *advocate* at least a somewhat nearer approach to what they regard as a more scriptural order.

Alarmed at these tendencies, Dr. Merle d'Aubigné opened the controversy now in question by printing a small tract, entitled '*L'Ancien et le Ministre*,' in which

he endeavoured to show that the two offices of elder and minister, far from being one, were, in the primitive Church, totally distinct.

This publication soon led to a second, by Col. Charles Saladin, called '*L'Ancien et son Ministère dans l'Eglise selon l'Ecriture*,' in which it was maintained that the Apostles established no other spiritual office in the Church beside that of Elder.

These productions ultimately gave occasion to three articles in the '*Archives du Christianisme*' of Paris, from the eloquent pen of Count Agénor de Gasparin, in defence of the position taken by M. Saladin. They appeared respectively in the numbers of the *Archives* published on the 23rd of January, the 13th of February, and the 13th of March, 1858.

M. Merle was, of course, not backward in justifying his own views through the same journal. This was done in five separate articles, which, when completed, were immediately reprinted in the form of a pamphlet, under the title, '*Il y a un Ministère de la Parole, institué de Dieu,—Maintenons le.*'

To this *brochure* M. Gasparin quickly replied in other articles, which have also been published separately, under the title, '*Encore le Ministère! Réponse à M. le Professeur Merle d'Aubigné.*'

Since then a third pamphlet has been issued by M. Merle, entitled '*Sacerdoce universel des Chrétiens contre-poids du Ministère*,' in which some of the views advocated in his previous publications are, it is generally thought, somewhat modified.

M. Bost père seems also to have mingled in the fray, by maintaining, in the '*Chrétien Evangélique*' of the 25th

April last, that Scripture lays down no law or rule at all relative to Church organization, but leaves such matters to be decided by the peculiar wants and circumstances of the Church in different ages.

The controversy itself is by no means an unimportant one. It is rightly regarded by all parties as having a very serious bearing, not only on the particular church in the bosom of which it has arisen, but on the interests of Christianity in general; and the manner in which it has been conducted justifies the belief that those who have engaged in it have done so only under a high sense of duty, and with a constant recollection of their responsibility to Christ. The *spirit* in which it has been maintained is truly admirable. Such a profound respect for recognized talent and character, such a delicate appreciation of Christian excellence, and such unbroken affection, even when most widely differing in opinion, has, alas! seldom been manifested by religious combatants. The *fact* of its existence in the present case is both cheering and hopeful; it justifies the expectation that great good will ultimately be the result.

Throughout the entire discussion M. Merle simply defends what is ordinarily termed *Presbyterianism*, which he considers represented by *one ruling and teaching elder*, called the minister, who, as such, is separated from all secular pursuits, — sustained either by endowments, by pew rents, or by voluntary subscriptions, and *aided* by laymen, who are styled elders or deacons, according as their duties partake of a mixed, or a purely secular character. Departure from this order, in the direction contemplated by his opponents, he regards as Plymouth Brethrenism, or, to use his own term, semi-Darbyism.

M. Gasparin, on the other hand, attacks clericalism in all its forms, and, denying that any such distinction, as that which is involved in the terms clergyman and layman, is sanctioned by Scripture, bids us choose between a purely clerical system, like that of Rome; a partial one, like that established at the Reformation; or the entire abolition of every form of clergy, in conformity with apostolic principles.

To Rome, he says, a clerical order is indispensable; catholicism is but an expansion of clericalism; the two facts are, in truth, but one. On this question, Rome openly abandons Scripture. The Elder disappears altogether, and in his place we have the Priest,—the consecrated one; a man separated from his brethren, and a stranger to the age in which he lives; a being supposed to be surrounded by a peculiar sanctity, and invested with an indelible character; a person distinguished from ordinary mortals by his education, by the language he speaks, by the garments he wears, by his tonsure, by his celibacy, and by his claim to be a mediator between God and man.

Such is the Priest of Rome.

The Reformers, he goes on to say, rejected the Priest without returning to the Elder, and *invented* the modern minister of the Gospel: a Priest, but without celibacy, and without specific sanctity; an Elder, *plus* consecration and the renouncing of secular employments.

And now for the apostolic organization. *There*,—that is, in the Acts and the Epistles,—the very notion of clergy, he maintains, finds no place. Not a hint do we get there of a distinction between Clergy and Laity. Men are there sacred or secular, not according to their office, but according to the time they are able to give to the service of the

Gospel; receiving remuneration, it may be, but remuneration differing in amount according to need; and all, whether paid for services or not, submitting alike to the duties and conditions of common life. They were not only husbands and fathers,—they were men who never dreamt that they could be soiled by contact with a secular profession or a worldly calling,—they were men who could understand and estimate the value of St. Paul's teaching, when he exclaims, "Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have showed you all things, how that *so labouring* ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts xx. 34, 35). They knew nothing about consecration, or indelibility of character,—they recognized nothing beyond that solemn benediction by imposition of hands, which was given to all those who undertook any work in the name of the Lord.

We are told, adds M. Gasparin, that in thus flying from Clericalism we shall inevitably fall into "Darbyism or semi-Darbyism." We might have merited such a reproach if we advocated the suppression of any one of the apostolic institutions. But we do nothing of the sort. We carefully preserve Doctors and Evangelists, as well as Bishops; for we advocate study and science, as well as preaching.

"I cannot lay down my pen," he says, in conclusion, "without again referring to the character of this controversy. It is a discussion between those who love and esteem each other,—between those who know that after all they are a thousand times more united than opposed. Such discussions are truly both a privilege and a blessing. They show that it is possible to have such an attachment

to Truth as will not permit the willing acceptance of that which seems to be error, and yet such an attachment to ecclesiastical connexions as shall forbid the possibility of rupture."

"For myself," he continues, "I believe that we have arrived at a period of crisis and transition,—a period when various questions relative to the Ministry, to Baptism, and to Discipline, demand a solution, and must have one. I profoundly pity those religious societies in the bosom of which such subjects dare not be discussed.

"Regarding M. Merle d'Aubigné, I have no anxiety, for we acknowledge one and the same authority,—that of the Scriptures and of apostolic example. The more I advance in life, the more satisfied I become that there need be no hopeless differences between those who acknowledge this one Court of Appeal. With those who deny that the teaching of Scripture is clear as to ecclesiastical arrangements, I have much less in common. I know that the ordinances of the apostles differ from those of Moses chiefly in this,—that they are not mere rules. The room left for liberty and diversity is immense; and in forms of worship in particular many modes may be followed, without any person being justified in insisting that any one form is obligatory. But *the principles* laid down in Scripture are unchangeable."

If the apostles *really* established but two orders in the Church,—those of elder and deacon, and yet, while acknowledging this, we claim liberty to say that circumstances have changed, and that therefore new organizations are required,—others, on the same ground, may maintain that a Hierarchy has become needful, and others still, a Pope. Let it not be forgotten that the Papacy itself was accepted

by Melancthon at Augsburg *as a human institution;* and that the other Reformers, in virtue of the theory which refuses to discover in Scripture any obligatory rule relative to the government of the Church, preserved, under the title of "usages in themselves indifferent," a mass of traditions which both Anglican and Lutheran High Churchmen are now turning to sad account.

The points at issue may be thus stated.

M. Merle maintains that Scripture never attributes to the eldership the function of evangelization; in other words, that *elders never preach,*—which term he invariably uses as implying the public proclamation of the Gospel, in a set discourse, to a multitude of persons.

M. Gasparin denies that any person or class in particular is authorized by Scripture to claim the *exclusive* right of *thus* proclaiming the Gospel. M. Gasparin has no objection to retain the minister under the title and with the office of elder evangelist; but he would allow every elder also, if qualified, to preach. M. Merle rigidly confines preaching to the minister, and seems to imagine that if the exclusive right to perform this part of Divine service be yielded, the office of the minister of the Gospel is in fact annihilated.

M. Merle's argument, so far as it is worth anything, amounts, after all, to no more than this,—that in the New Testament the offices of evangelist and elder are *distinguished* from each other, which, I suppose, no one disputes. He would be the first to admit that, in one form or other, *every Christian* should be an evangelist, for he firmly holds to the universal priesthood of all believers; and, since *deacons*, such as Philip and Stephen, were preachers, he will find it very hard to satisfy anybody, in the absence of

clear Scriptural testimony, that *elders* were forbidden to do so.

It is difficult to see what M. Merle would gain, even if he could establish the distinction to which he attaches so much importance; for the modern minister differs as widely from the ancient evangelist as from the elder, "since he is attached to one congregation, is chiefly employed in edifying the flock rather than in proclaiming the Gospel to the ignorant, uniting, in fact, in his own person the various offices of evangelist, elder, and teacher." M. Gasparin, with a good-natured smile, and with more truth than will generally be admitted, says, *he is an invention of the Reformers.*

M. Merle admits, that in assuming this series of characters, the minister has swallowed up altogether the function of the *Pastor-Elder;* that now the elder, so called, is only a secular assistant to the preacher, since *he* never feeds the flock; and he frankly avows that, in his judgment, so great an evil ought to be corrected.

This is going to the root of the whole matter. When *that* evil *is* corrected, controversy will cease.

In the second chapter we intend to show the practical working of the principles advocated by M. Gasparin among the Protestants of Italy, in the recent awakenings in Sweden, and, with modifications, in the Church of Wurtemberg. In a third, and, perhaps, subsequent ones, we may probably review the entire subject, and offer such practical suggestions as may appear likely to be useful.

E.

READINGS WITH A SCEPTIC.

THE GOSPEL OF ST. MATTHEW.

An Introductory Chapter.

SCEPTIC.—Before we commence our Scripture readings, allow me to ask what theory of inspiration you adopt? About a dozen conflicting ones are, I believe, afloat.

Believer. I can scarcely answer that question. I accept the inspiration of Scripture *as a fact;* but *how* the work was accomplished,—in what way the speaker or writer was made a recipient of the Divine impulse,—to what extent, and under what conditions, the human element was allowed to share in the production of the oral word or the written record, I am utterly unable to say.

I certainly regard inspiration as something very different from genius, however high, and much more than deep spiritual insight, however distinguished. I conceive that it *must* include the full amount of Divine direction, control, suggestion, and information needful to secure the end for which the revelation was given. But *how much* is really involved in this necessity, beyond accuracy in statement, and accordance with the Divine will as to doctrine, I am quite unable to determine.

Nor do I think that the apostles and evangelists themselves know much more. Luke, with beautiful simplicity, expresses the motive which induced *him* to write—"Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed

amongst us, it seemed good to me also to write."—Luke i. 1—4. The Apostolical Epistles (inspired expositions of Christian doctrine) appear to have been composed, so far as the writers were concerned, simply with a view to meet the exigencies of the time. Paul on one occasion "being absent," writes lest he should be obliged, when present, to "use sharpness"—(2 Cor. xiii. 10); at another, only in order that "henceforth" no man might trouble him about Judaism (Gal. vii. 17); at a third, to warn or to exhort, to comfort or to stimulate, his own immediate friends or converts.

James, and Peter, and Jude, and John, in like manner, communicate with individuals or churches, according to the urgencies of the hour, or the impulses of Christian love; *not one of them probably being in the least degree conscious* that he was writing for all time,* foreseeing the wants of all generations, and supplying the Church with spiritual nourishment for two thousand years. They, in common, as St. Luke tells us, with many others, simply performed the duty of narrating the fact, or expounding the doctrine as it presented itself to their own minds, while the same God, who in His infinite wisdom suffered the writings of the many to die and be forgotten, preserved these, *the few*, because specially inspired by His Holy Spirit, for the instruction and guidance of His Church in all coming time.

Sc. But *why* do you accept inspiration as a fact at all? What *reason* have you for coming to the conclusion that the

* Not that they were unconscious of speaking by the Spirit of God, although, from an expression or two in the Corinthians (1 Cor. vii. 40), it would seem that they were not always clear on this point, but simply that they were unconscious of the ultimate purpose of their communications.

Bible, as a whole, occupies a position different from that of other ancient writings?

B. Perhaps I cannot do better than answer this *general* question in the words of one whose works I know you greatly admire; and as he is a layman, you will not suspect him of any professional leaning,—I mean Thomas De Quincey. He says:—"In affirmation of the real spiritual inspiration of the Scriptures, let this fact have its full weight, that in the Bible, a series of more than thirty writers, speaking in succession along a vast line of time, and absolutely without means of concert, all combine unconsciously to one end,—lock, like parts of a great machine, into one system,—conspire to the unity of a very elaborate scheme, without being at all aware what was to come after.

"*Here*, for instance, is one, living nearly one thousand six hundred years before the last in the series, who lays a foundation (in reference to man's ruin, to God's promises and plan for human restoration), which is built upon and carried forward by all, without exception, that follow. *Here* come a multitude that prepare each for his successor, —that unconsciously integrate each other,—that, finally, when reviewed, make up a total drama, of which each writer's separate share would have been utterly imperfect, without corresponding parts that he could not have foreseen. At length, all is finished. A profound piece of music, a vast oratorio, perfect and of elaborate unity, has resulted from a long succession of strains, each for itself fragmentary. On such a final creation resulting from such a distraction of parts, it is indispensable to suppose an overruling inspiration, in order at all to account for the final result of a most elaborate harmony.

"Besides,—which would argue some inconceivable magic,

if we did not assume a providential inspiration, watching over the coherences, tendencies, and interpolations of the whole,—it happens that in many instances *typical* things are recorded—things ceremonial that could have no meaning to the person recording — prospective words, that were recorded and transmitted in a spirit of confiding faith, but that could have little meaning to the reporting parties for many hundreds of years.

"Briefly, a great mysterious *word* is spelt, as it were, by the whole sum of the scriptural books, every separate book forming a letter or syllable in that secret and that unfinished word, as it was for so many ages. This co-operation of ages not able to communicate or concert arrangements with each other, is neither more nor less an argument of an overruling inspiration, than if the separation of the contributing parties were by space and not by time. As if, for example, every island at the same moment were to send its contribution, without previous concert, to a sentence or chapter of a book; in which case the result, if full of meaning, much more if full of awful and profound meaning, could not be explained rationally without the assumption of a supernatural overruling of these unconscious co-operators to a common result."

To me this argument in favour of the Scriptures seems unanswerable; it places the Bible in a position altogether distinct from that of any *pretended* revelation, and, apart from all theories about *the mode*, justifies, I think, the assumption that inspiration, in some sense or other, and a very high sense too, is *a great fact*.

Do not, however, imagine that I am asking you to begin the perusal of St. Matthew's Gospel *as an inspired book*. Were I to do so, you would, I know, instantly tell me, and

very justly, that this was taking for granted the very point in dispute. I merely ask that you should read this tract of Matthew's, for such it is, as you would any other document that put forth an equally plausible claim to be received as Divine, viz., with the full intention decidedly to accept or indignantly to reject it.

Perused for such a purpose, I need scarcely suggest that it should be examined seriously and thoughtfully, with a mind at least *open to conviction;* and I think I may fairly add, not unaffected by the recollection that the volume in which it is found has stood the test of eighteen hundred years; that during all that time multitudes of the wisest and best of men have bowed before it; that the noblest intellects and the largest hearts the earth has ever seen have rejoiced in its testimonies more than in all riches; and that its moral influence, wherever it has penetrated, has been invariably elevating and sublime.

With these preliminary considerations operating on our minds as adequate reasons for respectful inquiry, we may, I think, at once proceed to the reading of the book.*

* The grounds on which the *genuineness* and *authenticity* of the Gospels are sustained, are so fully and perspicuously stated by various writers on the evidences, that it is only necessary to observe there is far stronger proof of the existence of Jesus Christ, than there is that such persons as Alexander or Julius Cæsar ever lived; that the Gospels are received as genuine for the same and much stronger reasons than those on which we receive the writings of Tacitus, or any other heathen author; and that infidel writers, such as Hobbes, Chubb, and Bolingbroke readily grant this much at least. Lord Bolingbroke says, "It is out of dispute that we have in our hands the Gospels of Matthew and John, who gave themselves out for eye and ear witnesses of all that Christ did and taught."—*Bolingbroke's Works*, vol. v. p. 91, 4th edit.; quoted by Mr. Horne, *Crit. Int.*

Sc. Only one more preliminary question, and then I am quite ready. The Bible is an old book; it has passed through many hands, and is now read mainly in translations. What security have we against *false readings?* I do not refer to variations in letters, or the position of commas, or any of the very trifling matters which make up the great body of what are known as "various readings," but to the *possible* suppression or distortion of truths of a very important character.

B. As Mr. De Quincey has already been so largely quoted on inspiration generally, it will perhaps be but fair to hear what he has to say on this point also. "We are all aware, says he, of the boyish sport sometimes called 'drake stone;' a flattish stone is thrown with a little dexterity, so as to graze the surface of a river, but so also as in grazing it to dip slightly below the surface, to rise again from this dip, again to dip, again to rise, and so on alternately dipping and rising *à plusieurs reprises.* In the same way, with the same effect of alternate resurrections, all scriptural truths reverberate and diffuse themselves along the pages of the Bible; none is confined to one text, or to one mode of enunciation; all parts of the scheme are eternally chasing each other, like the parts of a fugue; they hide themselves in one chapter, only to restore themselves in another; they diverge, only to re-combine; and under such a vast variety of expressions, that even in that way, supposing language to have power over religious truth—which it never had or can have,—any abuse of such a power would be thoroughly neutralized.

"The case resembles the diffusion of vegetable seeds through the air and through the waters; draw a *cordon sanitaire* against dandelion or thistledown, and see if the

armies of earth would suffice to interrupt this process of radiation, which yet is but the distribution of weeds. The final inference is this, that scriptural truth is endowed with a self-conservative and a self-restorative virtue; it is self-protected; first, internally, by the complex power which belongs to the Christian *system* of involving its own integrations, in the same way as a musical chord involves its own successions of sound, and its own technical *resolutions*; secondly, in an external and obvious way, it is protected by its prodigious iteration, and secret *presupposal* in all varieties of form. Consequently, all the peril connected with language is effectually neutralized."

STANDING NOTE.—Whatever may be the *apparent* character or tendency of any Articles found in "THE INTERPRETER," we wish it to be distinctly understood that *they are not intended* to encourage secession either from the Communion of the Church of England, or from any body of Protestant dissenters. Secession leads by inevitable *consequences* to sectarianism; and sectarianism we abhor. Our sole aim is to promote such an amount of freedom of thought, and liberty of action in Church matters, *within* existing bodies, as may best tend to further that true Christian Unity which is *counteractive* of all Schism "in the Body."

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints—as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine.*

REVIVALS.

BY "Revivals of Religion," technically so called, we understand the occurrence at different times and in different localities of certain unusual phenomena, such as the prevalence of a singular attention to religion in an entire community; the awakening of whole districts to religious earnestness; and the conversion of multitudes from the service of sin to that of holiness.

We regard these movements as established facts,

[Registered for transmission abroad.]

BRITISH MUSEUM

and spiritual realities; for we believe the mass of conversions effected at such seasons to be genuine.

Further, since the emancipation of any man from the tyranny of evil, and his entrance into the freedom and happiness of a renewed child of God, is always the work of the Holy Spirit, we feel no difficulty whatever in saying that "Revivals of religion," so far as they prove their genuineness by their results, are indications of the Divine favour, and should therefore never be lightly esteemed, or spoken of with irreverence.

Beyond this we cannot go. We are by no means prepared to admit that "Revivals" are, in their theological aspect at least, special and peculiar outpourings of Divine grace,—Pentecostal effusions of the Holy Ghost in answer to the prayers of the Church, or indications of the way in which God may be expected to bring about that universal reign of righteousness and truth which most Christians consider to be in the future.

That *the origin* of these movements is frequently concealed from human eye we admit; but *their course* is always more or less under human direction; for the awakening generally *blends* at a very early period with a particular order of religious emotions, and is commonly marked by strong theological peculiarities.

To these it may not be unadvisable to direct attention.

The first and most striking of these peculiarities is *the keenness* of the pain and distress which are then generally felt on account of sin; the vivid dread of Divine wrath which is in consequence experienced;

and the force of the persuasion connected therewith that eternal misery is at the door. We do not say that this state of mind in an awakened sinner is strange or unnatural, but we say that *its prevalence* is a peculiarity in Revivals. It is deliverance from this terror, by trust in Christ, that occasions the sudden transition from grief to joy, sometimes from a state of despair to one of actual rapture. In proportion to the depth of the misery is commonly the subsequent peace and blessedness.

Now Scripture presents to us *two* forms, and only two, in which conviction of sin manifests itself under an Apostolic ministry. One is, as a sudden and striking affection,—in which case it is always occasioned by the transgressor becoming all at once conscious of the guilt of *some one particular sin*,—some plain overt act of evil which he has been committing. Such was the case with the 3,000 who were "pricked to the heart" under Peter's first sermon. They were men,—many of them "devout men," who then first became convinced, under overwhelming evidence, that they had murdered the Messiah. What more natural than that under such circumstances they should cry out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Such too, stript of its miraculous accompaniments, was the conversion of St. Paul. He suddenly awoke to the conviction that, under the influence of a mistaken zeal, he had been persecuting the Christ of God. The moment he perceives this, he cries out, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Such also was the case of

the Jailer. In a moment, under the terrors of the earthquake, the truth flashes across his mind that the men whose feet, by a refinement of cruelty, he had been placing in the stocks, were the messengers of Heaven, and he exclaims, like a bewildered man, "What shall I do to be saved?"

In all these instances the excitement was in connection with special and peculiar circumstances, and it was marked by sorrow *for one particular sin*. When the agitation passed away, in each of these cases the disturbed mind quietly rested on truth, and growth in the Divine life commenced.

The second class of "convictions" under Apostolic preaching are those in which no sorrow is perceptible. The cases of Timothy, of Lydia, of the Apostolic converts generally, nay, of the Apostles themselves, will naturally be thought of under this head. In none of these instances, nor in any, we believe, that are recorded in the Scriptures, is there any manifestation of that overwhelming dread of God, or of eternal misery, or even that crushing sense of sin generally supposed to be felt even by the most amiable persons in consequence of their depraved natures, which, in modern times, seems to be regarded as a necessary evidence of true conversion.

How is this? we may well ask. Can it be supposed that these persons had no just sense of their sinfulness? Certainly not. The truth probably is, that with them, as it assuredly has always been with multitudes of the holiest Christians, conviction of sin was a progressive

work; it grew with their Christian growth, and strengthened with spiritual strength. The *more* they came to know of themselves, of God, of the purity and perfection of the Divine law, and of their own frailty and weakness, the deeper became their conviction of their own sinfulness, and of God's exceeding grace and mercy in Christ Jesus.

Modern experience has added to these two forms of conviction *a third*, distinct from either. It is that of overwhelming grief on account of the sinfulness of our natures, accompanied generally by a new and hitherto unfelt dread of that eternal torment which is supposed to await all the unconverted. Now this state of mind, we fearlessly assert, is ordinarily produced by a certain class of theological teaching,—by certain logical processes of thought, brought to bear with all possible force upon the fears and hopes of the susceptible. Sin,—*all* sin, even a sinful thought, nay, the very possession of a sinful nature, is by such teachers always represented as an *infinite* evil, because committed against an infinite God, and *therefore* sure to receive an infinite punishment, unless pardoned through faith in the One perfect and infinite Sacrifice; a faith which always supposes deep convictions of guilt, and the *conscious* reception of a new heart.

Preaching of this character is ordinarily accompanied by frequent presentations of the "terrors of the Lord," and in times of Revival by thoughts like these:—"God *now* commandeth all men everywhere to repent;" "to delay is to die." "The Spirit of God is now moving

over our town or city: if suffered to depart, the day of grace is probably gone for ever." Again and again is the sinner told that "if the Law was hard to the disobedient, the Gospel is harder;" that "if they who despised Moses' law perished without mercy under two or three witnesses, much less shall they escape who have trampled under foot the Son of God, and done despite unto the Spirit of grace." In vain does the distressed man plead the mercy of God; the answer is at hand,—"He that believeth not is condemned already,"—"the wrath of God abideth on him." "Every principle of the Gospel witnesses against him a deeper damnation. Every bowel of tenderness which the Gospel opens to him only proves him more worthy of hell. The man must repent and submit; and so long as he refuses, there is no Law or Gospel in the universe, which God has promulgated, from which a single word of consolation can lawfully be read to him."*

Such is unquestionably the general character of what is ordinarily called "Revival preaching;" and the *result* of it is, unquestionably, very often the conversion of sinners, and sometimes the awakening of entire neighbourhoods to the consideration of the things that belong to their eternal peace.

Ought we then even *to hint* that nothing of this kind is found in Scripture; that the Apostles never preached in this way; that the fearful texts we have quoted all occur in connexion with circumstances

* These passages are literal quotations from an Episcopalian revivalist.

which give them a somewhat different bearing; that the first (Acts xvii. 30) distinctly relates to the worship of idols; that the second (Heb. x. 28, 29) is addressed to *Believers,* on the supposition of their sinning "wilfully," *i. e.*, living in sin, "after having received the knowledge of the truth;" and that the third (John iii. 18) is applied to the rejection of Christ by the Jews, described as men who "loved darkness better than light, because *their deeds* were evil."

We are far from asserting that these texts are not applicable to the unconverted people of England; they have their voice to each one of us, and they teach most solemn and awakening truths; but we do say, that in the way in which they are commonly used, they form the basis of what we must—at the risk of being both misunderstood and misrepresented—venture to term an EXAGGERATED THEOLOGY.*

A second peculiarity in "Revivals," and equally worthy of note, is that conversions at such times are usually *sudden.* The inference drawn is that they are *extraordinary.* But this by no means follows. Con-

* Do not let it be said that we are asserting that *the evil of sin* is exaggerated. That is not our point; but that certain methods of stating that evil are so exaggerated, that they diminish instead of deepening the impression intended to be produced; that strong feelings in relation to the evil of sin *in general* may exist, without any corresponding consciousness of the guilt of particular sins. Hence thousands in the United States, in times of Revival, are in agony on account of their sinful natures, but utterly insensible, both at that time and afterwards, to the sin involved in sanctioning the "institution" of negro slavery.

version, properly speaking, is always sudden. The quickening of *spiritual life,* like the quickening of that which is natural, is the work of a moment. We say of a converted man, and with the strictest propriety, He *was* dead, he is now alive; signifying thereby that a process has been accomplished which, from its very nature, cannot be a gradual one. But the *manifestation* of this new life to others, nay, to the person who enjoys it, may be very gradual. Like the blind man whose eyes our Lord opened, he may at first see very imperfectly, men appearing to the newly opened eye as "trees walking,"—exaggerations and mistakes of all kinds waiting to be corrected by use and experience.

The only real difference that we can see between those who are "born again" under ordinary circumstances, and those who receive the great blessing in times of Revival, is that in the former case life *develops* without any particular stimulant, while in the latter it is, so to speak, *forced.*

A *third* peculiarity in "Revivals," and the last we shall notice, is the rapid and oftentimes very remarkable extension of religious feeling among all classes by which they are distinguished. This is usually explained by the supposition that "showers of Divine grace" have mercifully been permitted to fall upon the particular locality which is blessed by this unusual visitation of the Spirit.

We are not quite sure that such a mode of looking at the matter is altogether in accordance with Scrip-

ture, which nowhere teaches that the Holy Spirit is now *withheld;* but on the contrary, distinctly reveals Him as having come down to earth in consequence of the exaltation of the Redeemer. What other meaning can be attached to our Lord's words, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And *when He is come*, He will reprove (or, convict) *the world* of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John xvi. 7, 8)?

Now, if the Spirit of God in this sense *be* come, which we believe He is, why should we speak and pray as if we were still under the Old Testament economy? Assuredly no such theory is needed, either to *explain* Revivals, or to give God the glory of all that is good in them. Why can they not be regarded simply *as proofs*, which indeed they are, of the mighty power of social influences, when brought to bear, as they ought always to be, *in favour* of Religion, instead of being used, as they ordinarily are, in opposition to it?

This is, as we believe, after all, *the great secret* of such movements. As the excitement proceeds, and spreads from house to house, and from breast to breast, it affects, more or less, almost everybody it comes in contact with. ATTENTION to *the subject* of religion, in whatever way it may be viewed, is then *the rule;*—at other periods it is the exception. In ordinary times, all society seems to be in league against everything like religious *earnestness;* to display agitated feeling on such a topic is to risk being regarded with pity or

with scorn; emotion, therefore, if ever excited, is instantly suppressed, and the subject of it too often rapidly cools down to the average warmth or coldness of the religious atmosphere by which he is surrounded.

But in a time of Revival all this is changed; emotion is honoured,—smile meets smile, tear responds to tear, and *a force*, so to speak, is generated, of almost resistless character; but it is a force which partakes largely of human infirmity.

Ought we then to clothe such movements with the miraculous or semi-miraculous character which is so often claimed for them? Could not the same power be brought to bear in favour of Truth and Righteousness, without the theological exaggerations of which we complain; without even the risk of exciting hysterical affections; without, in short, any *unnatural* disturbance either of mind or body?

We think they might; since what is usually considered wonderful in periods of Revival is, after all, but the *normal* condition of a rational being. The man who is insane is not the man who suddenly awakes to living convictions in relation to the unseen world, but he who habitually lives in utter forgetfulness of them. Why then should not this fact be recognized as fully every day as it is in periods of religious excitement? If it *were* so, the social principle, instead of being, as now, habitually exercised to suppress religious feeling, would be employed to promote it.

In one sense, England is, at the present day, *in favour* of Christianity; for Infidelity is generally

regarded as vulgar and disreputable. Few men would wish either their wives or daughters to form intimate friendships with avowed unbelievers. But all this is merely conventional. *Nothing is more unpopular in general society than a living religious thought.* Christian people have quite as strong a dislike to such an utterance as others. The discussion of a disputed doctrine, or a vexed question of ritualism; of a favourite preacher; of any given number of evangelical or non-evangelical platitudes, is quite another thing. These, if adapted to the particular circle in which a man at the moment finds himself, are seldom regarded with disfavour. Nobody objects, simply because nobody is disturbed by them; they are thoroughly superficial; they move no depths in the human heart; they interfere with no man's tranquillity; if they excite any feeling at all, it is that of mere partisanship, which is generally acceptable when on the right side. Godliness (for we like that old word better than its modern equivalents) is, on the other hand, deemed *too esoteric* to be spoken of. It is therefore generally treated as Sceptics now-a-days treat the Bible,—bowed to, with an affectation of respect, but regarded as far too sacred for the common gaze. Alas! that this coldness should ever be partially excused by the empty phraseology, the insincerities, the sectarianism, and the bigotry which are too often *mixed up* with religious profession.

But nothing can justify such a course. For who can deny that both above and beneath all outward unveracities,—deep down in the hearts of multitudes, there

are thoughts and feelings bearing on loyalty to Christ and duty to man, which are habitually suffocated, out of regard to the false delicacies which, as a rule, govern society? A Revival, as it is termed, scatters all these falsities to the winds, and in doing so, removes one of the greatest stumbling-blocks in the way of the rapid spread of Christianity. Then, may it be truly said, "They that fear the Lord speak often one to another, and the Lord hearkens and hears."

What we really want is a *healthy* state of public opinion in relation to Religion. Then, and not till then, will all excitement and extravagance, the result of re-action, pass away, and the "still small voice" of God will be heard above the turbulence of the world, and in spite of the worldliness of the Church. A.

INTERPRETATIONS—No. 2.

1 Cor. iii. 12, "*Wood, hay, stubble,*"—as embodied in the train of thought which runs from the 9th to the 15th verse of the chapter.

COMMENTATORS.—"*Wood, hay, stubble*"—"Fables, endless genealogies, human traditions."—(*Gill*, also *Wells.*) "Doctrines unscriptural and false, though not fundamentally erroneous."—(*Guyse.*) "Unworthy professors admitted into the church to swell its importance or numbers."—(*Wilson*, also *Macknight.*) "Fancies and inventions, as distinguished from the pure truths of the Gospel."—(*Matthew Henry.*)

That doctrines *cannot* be referred to in this passage will, I think, be evident to any person who carefully studies the context. The Apostle is complaining of the carnality of the Corinthians, manifested more especially in strife and schism

(v. 3). He rebukes them for making too much of ministers, —mere human agents,—telling them they are "*God's* husbandry"—not man's, and that the one and only foundation of their faith is Christ (v. 4—9). Upon this foundation every "man" has to build up his own character,—not to be built up by a clergy, as is commonly taught. "Let every *man*," he says (not every minister, for Paul is not writing to a Presbytery, but to a people), "take heed how he buildeth thereupon" (v. 10); "for every man's work shall be made manifest,"—that which he builds will soon be tried "by fire" (the fire of persecution then approaching—so Whitby, Gill, Macknight, and Clarke). *Time* (for ἡ ἡμερα, "the day," may be thus rendered—see Benson and others) will thus show what every man's work is worth. Persecution will reveal it both to himself and others. So far as it is good,—worthy of the foundation, embodying the graces of the Spirit, "gold, silver, precious stones," trial will only purify it, and cause it to shine with more brilliancy; so far as it is "wood, hay, stubble,"—human error and infirmity, superstition or mere speculation, he (the builder) will to that extent "suffer loss;" but shall himself be saved, "yet *so as by fire*," viz., through that fiery trial of sorrow and persecution which is so often needed to separate the gold from the dross.

Dean Alford, like Dr. Bloomfield, confines the entire passage in question to CHRISTIAN TEACHERS, as if God had made His Church dependent *upon them;* whereas Paul distinctly denies this, *first* by telling the Corinthians that they are "*God's* husbandry," not man's, and next by the assertion that the Spirit of God dwells in *each* of them. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." L.

THE MINISTER.

COUNT AGÉNOR DE GASPARIN AND DR. MERLE D'AUBIGNÉ.

Chapter II.—Principles in Action.

IN our first chapter we endeavoured briefly to sketch *the history* of a controversy the character of which we have already indicated. In the present, we propose to show some of the principles advocated by Count Gasparin *in practical operation* on the continent of Europe.

We turn naturally first of all to Italy, not only on account of its contiguity to France and Switzerland, but chiefly because *there* circumstances beyond human control have forced those who have separated themselves from the Church of Rome to adopt a form of ecclesiastical organization widely differing from that which usually prevails in Protestant countries, and partaking in many respects of the character of that which is regarded by M. Gasparin as *most* Scriptural.

The movement out of which the communities to which we refer have sprung, is generally supposed to have commenced about 1848. Amid the commotions of that eventful year, the Sacred Scriptures first found their way into the hands of the Italian people. They were received with eagerness, and read with interest and delight. To what *extent* they were circulated it is not easy to say, for little

or no official agency was employed. As a forbidden book they passed from hand to hand, and from house to house, rapidly and secretly. In Sardinia, in Tuscany, in Lombardy, in the Papal States, and in Naples, in spite alike of the custom-houses and the priests, they made their way and were everywhere welcomed. Individuals who are supposed to know more about the facts of the case than others, estimate, although on what data it is not easy to say, that at the present time upwards of twenty thousand Italians are, more or less, reading the Scriptures with interest.

What number of these persons may be real Christians, it is of course not possible to say; but that *many* of them have become "new creatures in Christ Jesus" is unquestionable. Churches have been formed in different places, and officers appointed, in conformity, as they suppose, with the Apostolic pattern. In Sardinia, fourteen or fifteen brethren are employed as evangelists, and in other parts elders or pastors are to be found, although without formal designation.

But here it becomes necessary to state what is meant by this sort of eldership or pastorate, since it by no means necessarily implies a preacher. We find, then, the term Elder used to designate one who, being regarded as a man of approved piety and consistent character, with *a little more intelligence* than his brethren, has been appointed by his fellows, under the guidance, as they hope and believe, of the Holy Spirit—for it is one of their fundamental principles that the duty of a Church is not to *choose*, but to *discern* those whom God Himself has chosen for office—to exercise moral authority over, and more or less to instruct, the little body over whom he has been requested to rule.

To him they look as the one best fitted to preside at their meetings for worship, and to maintain order and discipline. He "breaks bread" to them. He expounds the Scriptures, so far as God gives him the ability. He unites with them in prayer, and, as a good shepherd, watches in love over the moral character, and endeavours to develop the spiritual gifts, of those who are entrusted to his charge.

Of course he is the *unpaid* servant of the Church, maintaining himself, like the rest, by his own industry, and desiring to be an example to the flock, as far as may be, in the discharge of those social and secular duties which belong to the Christian professor. Such pastors constitute at present the ruling eldership, so far as there is one, of Churches which exist in those parts of Italy where secresy is essential to safety.

The peculiarity of this system seems to be mainly this—the denial altogether of a priestly class in the Church of Christ, and the substitution in its place of lay pastors or elders, and teachers or evangelists.

Its operation, if successful, will therefore develop, first, a numerous body of lay pastors or elders—by whatever name they may be called—who will be untrained, unpaid, and undistinguished from their brethren, except by their supposed possession of qualities which constitute fitness to teach or rule; and then, in addition to these, a *limited* number of evangelists, educated or trained for the work they have to do, and supported for the exclusive service of the Church, by the contributions of the faithful.*

* The writer makes no apology to those who may have seen "Protestantism in Italy" for here repeating himself. He sees no necessity whatever for altering the expression either of facts or principles merely because they have been stated elsewhere.

Whether or no these simple arrangements can be perpetuated remains to be seen. At present they can only be regarded as experimental. The effect, however, hitherto has certainly been every way beneficial, promoting *a spirit of evangelization*, preserving unity both in doctrine and practice, and developing in a remarkable degree the family character of Christianity. So far, at least, the theory of M. Gasparin finds support in the experience of Christians who have tested it under circumstances unusually trying and difficult.

In SWEDEN, where a great awakening has for some years been going forward, clericalism has been shaken, and old ecclesiastical usages set aside, under circumstances differing in every particular from those which surround the Italians. Here the experiment is trying, not as a reaction from Popery, but within the bosom of an old Protestant Church, and under no other influences than the felt necessities of a new and higher spiritual life.

"Much as we had heard and read of these awakenings," says a recent deputation from England, "nothing had been exaggerated. The movement extends, with less or greater power, over the whole country. The nobility, the gentry, professional men, tradesmen, mechanics, labourers, all partake of it. Sometimes thousands of persons assemble where so-called laymen declare the Word of God, and meetings conducted by plain unlearned men, mechanics or labourers, are well and eagerly attended."

And how have these great ends been brought about? Chiefly, nay, all but exclusively, by lay agency—the agency of colporteurs and tradesmen. "We most impressively felt," say the ministers who formed the deputation, "as we

mingled with the recent converts, that *we were no longer amid the fixed forms and conventional religious usages* which obtain in our own country. *The new life flows in new channels, and throbs with a quicker pulsation.*"

And what have the clergy been doing all this time? *Vigorously persecuting* under the Conventicle Law. One brief extract will be quite sufficient to show the character of this enactment:—

"That in private houses, men and women, old and young, acquainted and unacquainted with one another, should have liberty to assemble, all under the pretence of devotional exercises and special worship, which, with the preaching and expounding of the usual Sunday's and holiday's texts, is found to be practised in several places,—this we consider neither useful nor needful, but rather as a dangerous novelty, which destroys good order in our Christian congregations." (Then follows fines and imprisonments for disobedience.)

Under this law, relentlessly applied, more than eleven hundred persons have been subjected to fine and imprisonment. In three years, 1851-4, upwards of four hundred were condemned to fines, and, when too poor to pay, to imprisonment on bread and water, *for the crime of receiving the Lord's Supper without the intervention of an ordained minister.*

It would certainly be hard to show that a return to the primitive practice, as advocated by M. Gasparin, would involve anything so thoroughly anti-Scriptural, to say the least of it, as this course of priestly tyranny.

But it may be said, these are exceptional cases. The question really to be considered is, not what may for a time be inevitable under an elementary state of things like that which exists in Italy, nor yet what may be permissible in a time of religious revival as in Sweden; but how far it is

possible, with advantage, to introduce a lay element into public worship under ordinary circumstances, and for a lengthened period?

Wurtemberg furnishes us with a reply.

In that kingdom, for nearly 260 years, an institution, if it may be so called, has existed of a very peculiar character; viz., meetings of the laity on the sabbath and otherwise for reading the Scriptures and prayer.

Out of the thousand parishes into which Wurtemberg is divided, the large proportion have such meetings. In the city of Stuttgardt there are three distinct assemblies of this character. "I was present," says a well-known friend of evangelical religion, "at one of them. At least 200 persons were in the room. The meeting was presided over by a venerable man of the middle class, who was surrounded at a higher table by from fifteen to twenty of the most respected Christians of the place. This," said my companion (a clergyman) "is *the true Church of Wurtemberg, and the blessing of it to the country cannot be over-estimated.*"

Prelate Von Kapff, of Stuttgardt, thus spoke of these meetings, at the Conference of the Evangelical Alliance, held at Berlin in 1857:—

"You will be astonished," said he, addressing the assembled clergy, "when you hear how simple peasants, journeymen tradesmen, and officials, expound the word of God, communicate their experience, and edify one another. This, I believe, is the external appearing of the universal priesthood; and I can only beg the brethren who are pastors to promote such private meetings in their flocks, and strive in such assemblies to educate a people, who shall be independent and of full age, who can exercise these

glorious functions; a people that is not dependent upon us; whom we esteem as fellow-workers in the vineyard of the Lord, and *of whom we may learn.* I confess here that *I have learnt* in such assemblies a theology which was an essential addition to that which I brought with me from the University. In these lower schools, as I should call them, we preachers must also be among the hearers. It has often very much quickened me when I have heard from the mouth of a peasant or a journeyman things which I have certainly known before, but which, *as an experience*, have warmed my heart within me, and suggested new thoughts."

And what has been the general effect? The clergy themselves shall answer.

i. A missionary spirit so vital, that from these assemblies have been drawn most of the German missionaries who are now labouring in India and in other parts of the world.

ii. A piety so deep, that open Rationalism has never been able to show itself among the people in Wurtemberg.

iii. A consistency of character so marked, that ministers, even where they are not themselves evangelical, respect both the meetings and the men.

One word in conclusion. If an element *so essentially lay as this is* has been maintained in Wurtemberg for 260 years by the side of an ordained clergy, and within the bosom of a National Church, surely evidence enough is afforded that other bodies might venture with perfect safety to take *more than one step* in the same direction. Such a course would unquestionably be the best way of supporting Dr. Merle's proposition,—"*Il y a un Ministère de la Parole institué de Dieu,—Maintenons le.*"

In the next chapter we shall consider the teachings of Scripture on some of the points at issue. E.

READINGS WITH A SCEPTIC.

§ 1, MATTHEW, Chap. i. 1—17.

A Legal Genealogy.

"The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

"Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren; and Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram; and Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon; and Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse; and Jesse begat David the king.

"And David the king begat Solomon of her *that had been the wife* of Urias; and Solomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa; and Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias; and Ozias begat Joatham; and Joatham begat Achaz; and Achaz begat Ezekias; and Ezekias begat Manasses; and Manasses begat Amon; and Amon begat Josias; and Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon.

"And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel; and Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor; and Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud; and Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

"So all the generations from Abraham to David *are* fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon *are* fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ *are* fourteen generations."

SCEPTIC.—You are aware, of course, of the discrepancies which exist between this genealogy and that given by Luke. Such contradictions at the outset are surely fatal to any and all theories of inspiration?

Believer. Allow me to say that a very broad distinction must be drawn between discrepancies and contradictions. The former may be occasioned by a different object being aimed at by the respective writers,—by mere variety in chronological arrangement,—by diversified grouping, by condensation, by limitations in knowledge, by many things which are quite consistent with accuracy. The latter implies actual variance, and is certainly inconsistent with trustworthiness.

But this variance does not exist in the statements of the Evangelists. They frequently *differ*, but they never oppose each other. Their differences are not irreconcileable, nor do they prevent substantial agreement. The present is a case in point. I am quite willing to admit that there is some difficulty in thoroughly reconciling these two genealogies. It has generally been supposed that the one is the pedigree of Joseph, the other of Mary. Both were no doubt drawn from the public registers. The time for verifying them is, I think, past for ever.*

* "Who," says Mr. Alford, a recent and accomplished critic, "shall reproduce the endless combinations of elements of confusion which might creep into a genealogy of this kind? Matthew's, we know, is squared so as to form *three tesseradecads*, by the omission of several

Sc. True or false, then, I do not see of what possible importance the genealogy can be to me.

B. It may not be of much importance to you, yet it may relatively be of great value. Imagine yourself to be living in Judea some ten or fifteen years after the death of Christ, the time when this Gospel was probably written. The claims of the deceased Jesus to be regarded as the promised and expected Messiah are discussed in society. His character and miracles are the theme of frequent discourse. In relation to the claim made on His behalf men differ. The miracles are not disputed: the question is, Was He a prophet of God, or did He work His wonders by the agency of Satan? A crowd of witnesses affirm that He rose from the dead, and thus gave convincing proof that He came from God. His disciples, regardless of suffering, are everywhere proclaiming Him to be the Messiah—absent, indeed, for a time, but sure to come again in triumph, subduing all opposers.

Now suppose that, *at such a time*, a manuscript copy of this Gospel falls into your hands. Addressing you as a Jew, it opens, as it ought to do, by tracing the genealogy of Christ, *as the promised seed*, from Abraham to David, and from him, through Solomon's line, to Jacob the father

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generations. It was common among the Jews for the same man to bear different names; how do we know how often this may occur among the immediate progenitors of Joseph? The levirate marriage was common; how do we know how often this may have contributed to produce varieties in the terms of a genealogy? With all these elements, it is quite as presumptuous to pronounce these genealogies discrepant, as it is over curious and uncritical to attempt to reconcile them." The variations are *proof* of the independence of the two Gospels.

of Joseph, who was the reputed or *legal* father of Christ; and it does this in order to show its accordance with prophecies which you, *as a Jew*, hold to be Divine.

To you *then*, and under those circumstances, it would be felt to be of very great importance; forming, in fact, an essential portion of the evidence needful to establish the Messiahship of Jesus. At the same time, it could only be so on the supposition of its accuracy when tested by the public registers. If unsatisfactory, it would of course be a positive hindrance to belief.

Scripture is *progressive*. Some portions—and I think this is one—have mainly to do with *the past;* some are peculiarly adapted to the wants of the present day; and some others, I doubt not, yet wait for their full development in a time that is to come. Then, and not till then, will their practical value be fully estimated. T.

STANDING NOTE.—Whatever may be the *apparent* character or tendency of any Articles found in "THE INTERPRETER," we wish it to be distinctly understood that *they are not intended* to encourage secession either from the Communion of the Church of England, or from any body of Protestant Dissenters. Secession leads by inevitable consequences to sectarianism; and sectarianism we abhor. Our sole aim is to promote such an amount of freedom of thought and liberty of action in church matters, *within* existing bodies, as may best tend to further that true Christian Unity which is *counteractive* of all Schism "in the Body."

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at,—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints, as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine.*

DISCREPANCIES.

IN a former paper on "Revivals" we ventured to suggest that Scripture presents to us no form of conviction of sin corresponding to that which ordinarily prevails in modern religious awakenings.

In the present communication, we propose to point out some further discrepancies between modern and Apostolic modes of thought not less startling.

The first we notice is this: that while Scripture

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always attributes *change of heart* to the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, it nowhere indicates that the Apostles or their converts ever directed men to pray for the influences of that Spirit, *in order that* they might either be enabled or disposed to believe the Gospel. We say enabled or *disposed*, because there is no reason to suppose that any distinction was then drawn, at all corresponding to that which we draw between natural and moral inability. The one message of the primitive teacher to men was, OBEY. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God" (John vii. 17). "We are (Christ's) witnesses, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that OBEY Him" (Acts v. 32). "Repent." "Believe." "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all they that keep His commandments."

And yet, when a convert *was* made, they naturally, and with heartfelt sincerity, thanked God for him, as one "whose heart the Lord had opened;" and, unlike many among ourselves, they thought it no strange thing that it should be recorded regarding the Gentiles at Antioch in Pisidia, that "as many as were ordained (set in order, disposed) to eternal life believed."

Modern thought, on the contrary, finds an able representative in the late Dr. Chalmers, who, in his "Tron Sermons," earnestly maintains the *inability* of the unconverted to believe; enforces this conclusion on his hearers with irresistible eloquence; and supports it by every variety of brilliant illustration. He dis-

tinctly insists that the revelation of the Word is of no practical value to any individual without "an additional revelation of the Spirit;" that this personal spiritual revelation is to the recipient what the telescope is to the traveller—it shows him that which, *although always there*, could not by him otherwise have been seen; and he likens an unconverted man reading the Bible, to an idiot hopelessly and helplessly groping over the pages of a book, which, to his bewildered mind, imparts no thought.

Dr. Chalmers preached thus, not because he found any such doctrine "expressly set down in Scripture," but because he believed, in common with the Westminster divines, that these conclusions might, "by good and necessary consequence, *be deduced* from Scripture." Inferential theology in this sense, and to this extent, he thought might safely be admitted; and he did not see that such a course involved the essential principle of Rationalism. It never seems to have occurred to him, that in these strong statements about man's inability he was, in fact, *placing his own judgment*—the result of the exercise of his reason as a logician—on a level with the direct revelations of God in the Scriptures.

But *wherein*, it will be said, did this great and good man differ from St. Paul? We think he differed in two important particulars.

First, the Apostle Paul, in addressing sinners, always proceeded on the supposition (which Dr. Chalmers did not) that, in relation to mankind at large, the Spirit

was *already given*, in conformity with the promise of the Lord, when He said, "And when He (the Comforter, or Monitor) is come, He will reprove (convict) *the world* of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment;" adding, as if still more distinctly to show that this coming of the Spirit would have reference to faith on Himself, "Of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." (John xvi. 8—11.) Hence it is that St. Paul says, "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to *all* men" (Titus ii. 11); and St. John, that Christ is "the true Light which lighteth *every* man that cometh into the world." (John i. 9.)

The words of our Lord, in the Sermon on the Mount, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things, or (as Luke records it) *give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?*" have no bearing on the question *now* under consideration; for these words do not refer to conversion; they were spoken to believers—to the disciples,—and refer to such alone.

Secondly, The Apostle Paul, unlike modern theologians, *always* considered that the gift of the Holy Spirit, when *specially* imparted, was a donation bestowed *only on believers as such*, sealing and witnessing to their faith, sustaining their spiritual life, made essential to their spiritual growth; and that,

therefore, it was imparted not before, but *after* the intelligent reception of the Gospel. Such is clearly the teaching of Scripture. And this, be it observed, not only when the Spirit fell in the form of miraculous power, as in Acts x. 44—46, where this donation seems to be regarded as conclusive evidence of acceptance with God; but also in cases more purely spiritual, where the Divine gift is manifested, not by the power of speaking with tongues, but by the possession of love and peace. An instance of this kind will suggest itself at once as being recorded in the second chapter of the Acts, and the 38th verse, where Peter tells the three thousand to "repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins;" *after which*—for this is clearly his meaning—he assures them they shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, in accordance with the promise made to "as many as the Lord our God shall call." The *nature* of the gift here intended is seen in the results which follow its reception—steadfastness, disinterestedness, and joy.

This circumstance has not altogether escaped the notice of commentators. Mr. Alford, in a note on the passage, says, in relation to it, that the gift of the Holy Spirit was *the result of baptism.* His words are:—"The result of the baptism to which the Apostle here exhorts them, *preceded by repentance,* and accompanied by faith in the forgiveness of sins in Christ, was the receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Declining to adopt this or any other *theory* on the matter, we confine ourselves to drawing attention to

the *fact* that, according to the teaching of the Acts of the Apostles, the special gift of the Holy Spirit *follows*, and does not precede, Evangelical repentance and faith.

We observe now another peculiarity, equally worthy of note. Not only is there in Scripture no instance of a sinner being directed, *on account of his supposed inability to repent or believe*, to pray for his own conversion, but, strange as it may seem to us, the Apostles nowhere inculcate on believers the duty of praying for others *as the most effectual way of promoting their conversion.*

Frequent references are made to the duty and the privilege involved in Christians praying for one another, as heirs together of common blessings. "Brethren," says the Apostle to the Thessalonians, "pray for us;" we, on our part, long to be with you, "night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith;" but he never, in a single instance, refers to prayer as a means appointed of God for promoting the conversion of the world.

Further, Scripture records no instance of special and united prayer being made in the Church for the unconverted. There is, indeed, in the Epistle to Timothy a general direction, that "first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;" but this seems to have a direct reference to the welfare of the Church, since it proceeds, "For kings, and for all that are in authority; that

we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." And then it is added, as if connecting in some way the *salvation* of rulers with their abstinence from persecution. (Compare Matt. xxv. 42, 43.) "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, *who will have all men to be saved,* and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

That our Lord taught His disciples to pray, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as in heaven," is unquestionable;—that it is our privilege "*in all things,* by prayer and supplication, to make known our requests unto God," and therefore to pray fervently and hopefully for the conversion of friends or relatives, no one doubts; but this is a very different thing from calling upon the whole Church to unite as one man, in praying for the conversion of particular individuals; for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon a given locality; or for a universal diffusion of truth under the present dispensation, which is certainly not promised, and *may* be, for anything we know, inconsistent with the Divine purposes.*

That the early believers had relatives and friends living unspiritual lives, alienated from, if not opposed

* The present awakening of the spirit of prayer in the Churches is undoubtedly one of the brightest signs of the times, and it indicates, perhaps as clearly as anything can do, that great events are at hand—that God is about to appear either in mercy or in judgment: but it is by no means certain that the answer to this united prayer will be *in the form* generally expected. God commonly answers our petitions in ways very different from those which we, in our short-sightedness, confidently expect.

to, the Gospel of Christ, is certain. We *know* they had, because they received special directions in relation to such. Let us note these directions well. In the most touching case that can, perhaps, be imagined, that of an affectionate Christian wife united to a heathen husband, the man of her choice, the lover of her youth, the father of her children, what is the instruction of the Apostle? Simply this. Be in subjection to him, that he may without the Word be won by your "chaste conversation, coupled with fear" (1 Pet. iii. 2); or, as the same thought is expressed by another, Leave him not, "for the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy." (1 Cor. vii. 14.)

It is very remarkable, that in both these exhortations, without excluding prayer, *the one and only thing* referred to, as a means of conversion, is A CONSISTENT EXAMPLE—a holy walk and conversation.

Nor is it possible to conceal from ourselves another fact, which is this, that throughout Scripture the converted nowhere exhibit *distress or anxiety* in relation to the future condition of the unconverted. No one could imagine, from reading such accounts of the early believers as are furnished in the New Testament, that they supposed that their unconverted husbands or wives, parents or children, were living on the brink of a precipice, from which they might, at any moment, be plunged into eternal misery. *If they did* suppose this, it is truly wonderful that no indication of natural

feeling should appear; for their hearts were surely as tender as ours, and their love quite as great.

We find, indeed, St. Paul, in a burst of patriotic feeling, going so far as to say he could almost wish himself "accursed" [*i. e.*, made an anathema,—crucified like Christ] for his brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh, who were madly abandoning their privileges as God's chosen people; but he expresses no such feeling in relation to the Gentiles, whose souls were surely as valuable, and to whom he was the chosen Apostle. This exclusive anxiety for the Jew is the more singular, because, in the Epistle to the Romans, he distinctly asserts that "blindness" (or, as the margin reads, hardness) "is happened to Israel (only), *until* the fulness of the Gentiles be come in;" adding, "And *so all Israel shall be saved;* as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." (Rom. xi. 25, 26.)

We have also on record those burning words of his, that he so loved his Galatian converts, that for their *growth* in grace he was undergoing the pains of a second "travail;" but these were believers, not unconverted persons.

In the General Epistle of James we have not only a command to pray for others, but a direct assurance that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much;" and a further assurance that "he who converts a sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins." Very little attention, however, to the context will

show that the absolution there spoken of, as the result of the prayer of faith, refers exclusively to the removal of those special judgments which were inflicted *on Christians as such* by the Apostles, when the early believers grossly corrupted or disgraced the Christian profession.

One other fact, which we desire to approach with the deepest reverence, must now be noticed. It is this:—

The Lord Jesus is nowhere represented to us as praying for the conversion of mankind at large. In His last solemn supplication with His disciples He says distinctly, "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine;" adding, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." (John xvii. 9, 20.)

We are quite aware that commentators, in order to get rid of what they consider a great difficulty, alter the phrase, and read it thus: "I am not *now* praying for the world;" and go on to argue that in the 21st and 23rd verses Christ *does* pray for the world, in these words, "That they (the disciples) also may be one in us, *that the world may believe that thou hast sent me;*" or, as it is expressed afterwards, "*that the world may know* that thou hast sent *me*, and hast loved *them* (the disciples) as thou hast loved me." But there is surely a great difference between the petition that the world might *know* that Christ came from God, and *believe* that He was sent of God, and

therefore refrain from persecuting those whom God loved, and a prayer that the world itself might become one with the Elect Church. It has further been said, Christ prayed on the cross for His murderers: and so He did; but let the character of the petition be remembered; it was, that a particular sin—his murder—might not be laid to their charge, since, carried away by a false zeal, they *knew not what they did.*

We are not *theorizing* about these things, but simply *observing.* We have no sympathy whatever with what is ordinarily known as High Calvinism, but that is no reason why we should either ignore or neglect any one of the intimations of Holy Writ.

We are quite aware that minute observation of the facts of Scripture, when unaccompanied by any practical conclusion, is to most persons very distasteful. It is a process to which few are willing to submit; but it is, nevertheless, essential to the right understanding of the Sacred Record. To *observe,* for instance, as sceptics have often done, that neither the obligations of friendship, nor the claims of patriotism are enforced in the Bible, is by no means without its use; but to conclude that, *therefore,* Christianity is either unfavourable to the one or opposed to the other, would be to adopt a foolish and mischievous error. In like manner, to *observe* the precise course taken by the Apostles in relation to the unconverted; to *remark* the apparent absence of prayer in the early Churches for the heathen; to *notice* the non-expression of distress and anxiety for unspiritual friends or relatives;

and to *connect* all this with the existence of a faith, and zeal, and self-denial for Christ unparalleled in modern times, *may be* of the utmost importance: but to *conclude* therefrom that prayer for the spiritual life of others is discouraged in Scripture, or regarded either as unsuitable or of no avail, would be, to say the least of it, preposterous folly. Once for all, therefore, we claim the right of recording every *observation* we may make on any part of the Divine Word, without being at all supposed to favour the conclusions which many will say must necessarily be deduced therefrom.

Scripture, it has been well said, teaches us as much by its shadows as by its lights. Its silences are as expressive as its words. Alas! that it should have to be added, "To avoid offence, it is necessary to be wholly silent as to the silences of Scripture. A full search for, and discovery of, the 'treasure' thus 'hid in the field,' would be, in its practical application, only *a succession of offences.*"

But what, it will be said, is it intended we should learn from the facts now brought forward?

In order to answer this question, we propose another. How came it to pass that, in the absence of so much that stimulates us, these early believers were at once so earnest and so calm; so little pained by the great problems of the world, and yet so devoted and disinterested in their endeavours to remove its evils? How is it that, with the presence of so much zeal, there is in them such an entire absence of exaggeration

either in feeling or in statement; that they combine so deep a sense of personal responsibility, with such a constant and quiet reliance on everlasting love?

It *cannot* be that they believed less than we do; it must be that they believed more. It cannot be that they had a less vivid appreciation of the necessity of Divine aid than we have; it must be that, with all their personal consecration and absolute self-sacrifice, they yet thought less of human agency than we do.

May it not be that they viewed both the Church and the world from a different stand-point to that which we occupy? that their expectations in relation to the future were different from ours? that their view of the Divine dealings with man, of Christ's relation to humanity, of His final triumph over Satan and all Satanic works, were *truer*, because wider and more comprehensive than ours? that they were influenced *much more* than we are by plain and direct statements in Scripture, and *much less* by human inferences deduced therefrom, however apparently faultless the process? that, in short, they were unembarrassed by scientific theology, and therefore better able to drink in and to digest *all* the teaching of Scripture than we can possibly be?

In a future paper we propose to show what THE APOSTOLIC STAND-POINT really was, and wherein it differed from our own. A.

No. 3.

Isaiah xxxiii. 14, "*Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?*"

The verse from which these words are taken forms the text of President Edwards's celebrated sermon on "the fearfulness which will *hereafter* surprise sinners." He treats the words of the prophet, all through his discourse, as if they unquestionably applied to the eternal punishment of sinners in the world that is to come. Every one knows that, *in this sense*, they are still constantly used both in tracts and sermons, and apparently without the least intention of dishonesty.

Yet not a single commentator, I believe, of any repute, has ventured so to interpret them. Matthew Henry, who, in this case, fairly represents others, tells us distinctly that the fire referred to by the Prophet was "the destruction effected by the Assyrian army:" "it was like," he says, "the burning up of thorns, or the burning of lime (v. 12). When," he adds, "the sinners in Zion saw the Assyrian army besieging Jerusalem, and ready to set fire to it, finding they could not make their escape to Egypt, as some had done, and distrusting the promises God had made by His prophets," they exclaimed in despair, "Who among us shall dwell with devouring fire?" Let us abandon the city: "one had as good live in everlasting burnings as live here."

Mr. Alford, in a note on Mark ix. 49, seems to think that the fire referred to is not punitive at all; reading the text thus,—"Who among us shall dwell with the *purifying* fire?" and regarding the next verse as the answer,—"He that walketh in righteousness."

Leaving this question unsettled, may it not be wise to

ask, whether prevailing scepticism relative to FUTURE RETRIBUTION—a very different thing from doubt either as to the nature or extent of Future Punishment—may not partly be traced to the injudicious use of texts like this in its support?—texts which, by the common consent of all orthodox commentators, have really nothing to do with the subject.

No. 4.

Mark ix. 49, "*For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.*"

COMMENTATORS.—"*Salted with fire*—Seasoned with fire itself, so as to become inconsumable, and to endure for ever, in order to be eternally tormented."—(*Whitby*, *Guyse*, *Gill*, *Burkitt*, and others.) "The fire of affliction on earth."—(*Baxter*.) "Ye (the disciples) are the Lord's sacrifice (see Numb. xxxi. 23)."—(*Clarke*.) Bloomfield says, "There is, perhaps, no passage in the New Testament which has so perplexed the commentators, or so defied all efforts to assign to it any certain interpretation, as this. It is impossible to detail, much less to review, even a tenth of the interpretations which have been proposed." Mr. Alford considers "fire" here to be "the symbol of the Divine purity and presence. 'Our God is a consuming fire,' not only to His foes, but to His people; *in them* the fire burns up only that which is impure."

We suggest that the difficulties referred to, all arise from neglecting to pay a sufficiently strict regard to the context. Our Lord had been teaching the disciples—for it is to them He is speaking—that, as in cases of gangrene, it is necessary to lose parts of the body in order to preserve life, so, in relation to the soul, it is needful to cut off, at whatever cost, *everything* that would, if not thus separated, occasion its death, "the second death," and so ensure its ignominious fall into hell, "the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched."

What more natural after this, than the *unexpressed*, but not unfelt, inquiry on the part of the disciples, "Why such severity?" The words that follow supply the answer, "For" (because) "every one" (who enters my kingdom) "shall be salted with fire" (purified by discipline); "and every sacrifice" (as under the Old Testament dispensation) "shall be salted with salt,"—seasoned with grace,—incorruptible, Col. iv. 6, (to render it acceptable: see Lev. ii. 13). He, therefore, who will not submit to this purifying process, who will not consent to the removal of *all* that hinders life and growth in the soul, *chooses* death rather than life, and practically prefers the loathsomeness of corruption to eternal purity and blessedness.

Then follows the exhortation (ver. 50), "Have salt (wisdom and grace) in yourselves, and have peace one with another;" for the conversation had originated in a dispute as to who should be the greatest.

Without at all questioning *the eternity* of the doom that will fall on the finally impenitent,—for we believe in it,—we venture to observe, that the greatest circumspection should be used in speaking of the precise *nature* of that doom. There is something so fearful in the thought of finite beings being specially sustained in immortal youth, in order that they may suffer and sin eternally; something *so unlike* the revelation that God has given us of Himself; so inconsistent with His dealings towards *the first sinner*, whom He mercifully debarred from the Tree of Life, *lest* he should eat and live in sin for ever; that no one should venture to teach such a doctrine who has not better authority for so doing than this reference to the salting of sacrifices, or to the undying worm and flame of the valley of Hinnom, into which the *dead* corpses of criminals were thrown.

No. 5.

Mark ix. 44, "*Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*"

COMMENTATORS.—"The reproaches of the sinner's own conscience."—(*Matt. Henry, Martin, Macknight*, and others.) Alford refers to the passage in Isaiah from which the words are taken, but makes no remark. Bloomfield reads, "The eternal misery of hell," remarking that the Fathers are divided as to whether these miseries are material or figurative; some maintaining that *the worm* is figurative, but *the fire* material. He holds *both to be material.*

No one, I suppose, disputes that this passage is a quotation from Isa. lxvi. 24. Why, then, do we *refuse* to admit that these words, when used by our Lord, are to be explained by the context in the prophecy from which they are taken? Simply because we cannot *then* expound the text in accordance with what *we conceive to be* the teaching of Scripture in other places as to the doom of the wicked.

In Isaiah, if language be intelligible at all, the unquenchable fire, and the undying worm, are spoken of *not* in connection with living and sensitive beings, but with dead carcases. We *therefore*,—since we cannot otherwise make the words accord with our theological systems,—*change* the meaning altogether, and turn "the worm" into remorse of conscience, and "the unquenchable fire" into the undying torment of the sinner who is cast into it. We think we *deepen* thereby the horrors of eternal woe, and by that process *deter* men from sin. But is this justifiable?

Read the words in the sense in which Isaiah wrote them, and as Christ quoted them, and they fully harmonize with other passages of Scripture, which teach that the wilfully impenitent *lose* all the blessedness of eternal life; *endure* all the pangs of the "second death," whatever that may mean, and *become* eternally loathsome,—"an abhorring to all flesh." L.

THE MINISTER.

COUNT AGÉNOR DE GASPARIN AND DR. MERLE D'AUBIGNÉ.

Chapter III.—The Jewish Elder.

IN this chapter we shall endeavour to ascertain, from the New Testament, *what was*, in point of fact, the original constitution of the Church of Christ, as established by the Apostles; primarily in Judea, and subsequently among the Gentiles.

We shall do this without reference, at present, to a further inquiry, equally important, viz., how far such arrangements were, from their very nature, local or temporary; or how far they must be regarded as involving principles intended to be permanent in character, and universal in their application.

Regarding Pentecost, then, as *the birth-day* of the Christian Church, properly so called, and commencing our investigations there, the first thing that presents itself to our notice is, the election of an Apostle in the place of Judas, and the consequent recognition of *the twelve* as the authorized Fathers and Founders of the Christian community.

Respecting the nature of the office held by the Apostles there can be no question: they were at once the inspired Teachers and Evangelists, and the authorized and miraculously endowed rulers and governors of the entire flock of Christ. In the exercise of these functions they were above all human control; for they justified their claims, and

enforced their authority, not by mere appeals to the dignity of the office with which they had been invested, but by the exercise of direct miraculous power brought to bear upon offenders. (See Acts v. 1—11; xiii. 11; 1 Cor. iv. 21; v. 3—5, &c.)

The second appointment mentioned is that of Deacons,—"seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom," *chosen*, it would appear, by the body of the disciples, but *appointed* to office by the Apostles,—that office being the daily distribution of alms to the necessitous. These Deacons, invested as they were with the power of working miracles, seem to have been greatly instrumental in increasing the number of the disciples. One of them,—Stephen,—is soon called to witness for Christ as His first martyr (Acts vii.); another,—Philip,—also a distinguished preacher, makes many converts, and *baptizes* in the name of the Lord (Acts viii.) The rest of the diaconate, in all probability, within their various spheres were similarly engaged.

Now the first thing that strikes us here is, that *none of these men* were ordained to any spiritual work. The Apostles appointed them *by imposition of hands*, not to the office of preacher or pastor, but to a service regarded as every way inferior to that which occupied themselves. The sole reason given for the appointment is an anxiety on the part of the Apostles to be freed from all secular duties. "It is not reason," say they, "that WE should leave the Word of God and serve tables. We will give ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word" (Acts vi. 2—4).

And yet these Deacons both preach and administer ordinances; for Philip baptizes the Eunuch, evidently without the slightest idea that he was doing anything

irregular; and—which is stranger still—in the great persecution that arose after the death of Stephen, not the Deacons only, but "they that were scattered abroad"—all classes of believers—"went everywhere preaching the Word" (Acts viii. 1—4.) Nothing can be clearer than that, *at this time*, no distinction had arisen corresponding to that which we now recognize between clergy and laity; nor did anything, as far as we can see, separate "spiritual persons," so called, from those who followed secular employments. The Apostles, *as inspired*, stood apart and alone, and formed the solitary exception.

So far as the *Jewish communities* are concerned, at present no other appointments seem to have been made. And yet there must have been a large body of believers to guide and to govern; for we are told in one place, that at this period, "all Jerusalem was filled with the doctrine" (Acts v. 28); and in another, that "the number of the disciples multiplied greatly, a great company of the priests being obedient to the faith" (Acts vi. 7). How, then, were these people organized? There were *thousands* of them, unquestionably,—probably many thousands (Acts ii. 41; iv. 4). They were formed into churches, too; for we are distinctly told, a year afterwards, that "then had *the Churches* rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified (built up); and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied" (Acts ix. 31). The disciples, during all this time, are said to have continued "in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in breaking of bread and in prayers;" or, as it reads in another place, "breaking bread from house to house;" according to the marginal rendering, "*at home*."

No one, we believe, doubts that this "breaking of bread"

was in memory of the death of Christ, or that it was identical, in all respects, with what we now call "the Holy Communion," or "the Lord's Supper." And yet we have here no clergy; nay, so far as we can see, no ordained elder. It would seem, indeed, as if every Christian man was, up to this time, a priest in his own house; most probably regarding the ordinance of the Supper simply as the complement of the Jewish Passover.

The absence of any information as to the modes of worship adopted by the believers, or as to the nature of their Church organization, would seem to indicate that they continued Jews long after they became Christians. We know that they "assembled daily with one accord in the temple" (Acts ii. 46); and there is every reason to suppose, that when they met separately as Christians, it was in the "upper rooms" which they had been accustomed to frequent.

So far, then, as *the early Churches of Judea* are concerned, there is not a trace of anything like a distinction between spiritual and secular persons.

The conversion of St. Paul, and the opening of the kingdom of heaven to all believers, by the proclamation of the Gospel to the Gentiles, introduces us to a wider field of observation, and brings under our inspection the working of Christian institutions under different, and, in some respects, less favourable circumstances. And here the first thing noticeable is, that Peter, the appointed minister to Cornelius, having witnessed the descent of the Holy Spirit on him and other Gentiles, and having consequently justified their claim to baptism, *does not administer the rite himself*, but simply commands them to be baptized, and this under circumstances which seem quite to forbid the supposition

that the ordinance *could* be administered by any ordained minister. Why, one naturally asks, should he have done this, had he regarded the rite as conferring any spiritual benefit, or, in fact, as being anything beyond that *public avowal* of a change of sentiment and position which, in the case of proselytes, it had always been regarded as indicating under the Jewish economy, and which, *for the same reason*, it indicated under the Christian? In such a case it would, of course, be quite unimportant who performed the ceremony.

The next thing we observe, is the formation of Churches *out of Judea*, these being for the most part of a mixed character, consisting both of Jews and Gentiles. Antioch is first brought under our notice. Here Paul and Barnabas remain for a whole year, assembling themselves with the Church, and teaching much people; and here the disciples are first called Christians (Acts xi. 26): but with the exception of a pleasing manifestation of brotherly love to their Jewish brethren (ver. 29), we hear nothing of their proceedings as a Church. It is worth notice, however, that they send their alms for distribution, not *to* the Apostles, but *by the hands* of Barnabas and Saul *to the Elders* at Jerusalem. Such officers must, therefore, by this time have been appointed; unless we are to suppose,—and it is a natural supposition,—that those who had been elders among the Jews, *before* their conversion to Christianity, still retained that position among their brethren.

M. Merle says the institution of elders cannot be traced; it was not, he says, certainly established by Christ; and though he admits that it arose under the guidance and authority of the Holy Spirit, he strangely enough seems to think that its origin is less distinguished than that of the

minister. That, like the office of the deacon, it was *adopted* from the Jews is all but certain.

Now the office of elder among the Jews, first established by Moses (Exod. xviii. 12—27), was of a mixed character; its duties were partly secular and partly religious. The elder watched over the conduct of the different members of the synagogue; exercised discipline; took part in reading the Scriptures, and sometimes prayed in public worship; but was not, like the priest, separated from the duties of ordinary life. M. Merle says, the elder never preached. The right of pronouncing a discourse on the Word appertained to the prophet,—to one who had the gift of preaching. Be it so. Still, the fact that the ministry was so open that strangers coming in, like Paul and Barnabas at Antioch in Pisidia, were invited to address the assembly (Acts xiii. 15), shows that *the right* to do so was by no means restricted. Generally speaking, the office of ruler of the synagogue and that of teacher were separated; each one exercised his proper gift; but that some had two or more gifts cannot be doubted. So, among the Christians, it was a good thing when a bishop was "apt to teach," as well as to rule, and such were counted worthy of double honour, or, as it ought probably to be read, a double *honorarium*.

At Antioch we first hear of "prophets and teachers," specially so called; men who "ministered to the Lord and fasted," and on whom, by Divine direction, devolved the duty of ordaining the Apostle Paul and his companion Barnabas as Evangelists. This they did by prayer and by the imposition of hands (Acts xiii. 1—3).

One naturally asks here, Who *were* these prophets and teachers, that they should *ordain an Apostle?* We reply,—

obviously persons endowed with special gifts of the Holy Spirit. Beyond this we know nothing. There is nothing to indicate that they stood in any different position from others. They seem to have been distinguished only by the special character of their spiritual endowments. There is no evidence to show that they confined their labours to any one particular Church; they were probably, like Timothy, "teachers of the nations" (2 Tim. i. 11).

Paul and Barnabas now pursue their journey. At Salamis we find them preaching the Word of God in the synagogue of the Jews (Acts xiii. 5); and at Antioch, in Pisidia, as we have already seen, the *rulers* of the synagogue specially invited them, as strangers, to give a word of exhortation. The Gentiles too, in their turn, now beseech that the same word may be addressed to them; and the next sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the Word of God (Acts xiii. 44).

But a change is at hand,—a change which again alters the conditions under which the Gospel is preached. The consideration of this new element we must leave for the next chapter. E.

(In consequence of the length of our first article, we are obliged this month to omit the "Readings with a Sceptic," but they will be resumed in April.)

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints—as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine.*

STAND-POINTS.

IN endeavouring to ascertain what was the precise point of view from which the Apostles took their survey of the Church and the world,—of the present and the future of humanity,—it is necessary to bear distinctly in mind both the *truths* they admitted, and the *facts* by which they were surrounded.

First, then, we think it may fairly be assumed, that the great commission they had received from their Lord and Master would be constantly before their

[Registered for transmission abroad.]

minds, "Go ye therefore, and teach (*marg.*, disciple) all nations, baptizing them in (into) the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. xxviii. 19); or, as given by St. Mark (xvi. 15, 16), "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature (*lit.*, all creation πάσῃ τῇ κτίσει). He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (condemned for his unbelief).

Further, it is not unreasonable to suppose that, with the command thus given, would be inseparably associated the recollection of those glorious predictions of the Prophets which speak of a time when, "from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same," the name of the Lord "shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered, and a pure offering" (Mal. i. 11). We *know* that it was so; for St. Paul, addressing Agrippa as a believer in the Prophets, declares that the great object for which he lived, and for which he was judged, was, "the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come" (Acts xxvi. 6, 7).

Finally, we may be quite sure that they did not, and could not, forget the words of the Lord, when He said, "Many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt. xxii. 14); when He told them that, in this world, the flock of Christ would always relatively be a "little

flock;" and that, at the termination of its history, the "elect"—not mankind in general—would be gathered "from the four winds" (Matt. xxiv. 31).

All these *truths* were to them equally authoritative, and in their practical life and conduct, whatever difficulties might be in the way, it was necessary that they should be harmonized.

The *facts* by which they were surrounded would seem to them as hard to reconcile with any reasonable expectation that the Gospel would be universally or even generally received, as, after 1,800 years' additional experience, the facts of the present day seem to us.

Their *opinions* plainly ran in another direction; for Peter, notwithstanding his commission, needed a special vision to induce him to visit Cornelius, and it was long before the others could be made to see that Gentiles might become Christians without first passing through Judaism. Their own records show that the lives of most of them were commonly anything but that of persons in incessant movement.

St. Paul may, at first sight, seem to be an exception to this statement; yet nothing can be plainer than that *he* regarded his chief work to be the calling out of an election of grace from among the Gentiles. He always speaks of his mission in that character. He never indicates anything like an expectation that the acceptance of the Gospel would be either extensive or universal. Whether he *expected* Christ to return and put an end to the dispensation during his lifetime (as is now frequently asserted) may well be

doubted; for he had revelations regarding a coming "mystery of iniquity," which appear incompatible with that expectation: but he never seems to contemplate the universal diffusion of the Gospel in the world by and through the Church, except in the character of "witness."

His entire course, so remarkably under Divine guidance, indicates this. He is told to remain long at Corinth, because the Lord had much people in that city. He is, at one time, forbidden by the Spirit to preach the word in Asia. He seeks to go with Silas into Bythinia; but the Spirit suffered them not. He is directed by a special vision to Philippi. He remains for above two years at Ephesus. All these things clearly show what the true character of his work was.

In fulfilling it, as one "put in trust" with the Gospel, he proclaimed the message to all alike, Jew or Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, for *he knew nothing about the secret counsels of God.* His message to one and all was, "Repent, and believe the Gospel."

Two things invariably followed the delivery of the message,—some accepted, and others rejected the offer. To the first, he says, he was "a savour of life unto life;" to the last, of "death unto death." Those who accepted Christ he immediately recognized as persons "beloved of God," "called to be saints," "sanctified (set apart) in Christ Jesus," "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly (things or places) in Christ," "chosen in God before the foundation of the world," "predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus

Christ," "elected of God," and such like. He never addresses his converts in any terms implying a lower or less distinguished position.

On the other hand, he solemnly warns the rejectors of the Gospel of the fearful peril they incurred by their unbelief. He bids them beware lest that come upon them which is spoken of in the Prophets, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish." He speaks of them as of men who "judge themselves unworthy of eternal life;" he shakes off the dust of his feet against them; and when, not content with opposing themselves, they blaspheme, he shakes his raiment, and says unto them, "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean." But it is worth notice that he only speaks thus of men who, by distinct and overt acts, directly opposed themselves to Christ, — despisers, blasphemers, persecutors. He says not a single word about the great mass of persons who, then as now,— for human nature is the same in all ages,—were so busy, or thoughtless, or indifferent, that they took little notice of him, neither accepting nor rejecting his message, probably knowing nothing whatever about it. In this respect his conduct is an exact copy of his Master's, who denounced the hypocritical and persecuting Scribes and Pharisees (the great religious professors of the day) as "whited sepulchres," little likely to escape "the damnation of hell," while he simply mourns over the multitude as "sheep without a shepherd."

In our last paper, we felt it right to notice the

frequency with which Apostolic injunctions are given to Christians to pray for one another, and the singular *absence* of similar exhortations to pray for the unconverted, *as the most effectual way of promoting their salvation;* the absence, we mean, of anything akin to the feeling which now prompts us to assert, that intercessory supplication for sinners is "*the one means* God has left us" for winning the world unto Himself; that "the real cause the world is not converted is, the want of the outpouring of God's Spirit;" that "the lukewarmness of the Church is the reason why God withholds his Spirit;" that "fervent prayer will draw down showers of the Spirit upon the parched soil;" and that "it is *because* believers avail not themselves of their privileges" that "the avenues of God's grace to man are narrowed and impeded." *

We now repeat,—and we cannot at all see why Christian people should be either angry or sad at having their attention directed to the fact,—that (explain it as we may) the Apostolic attitude, so to speak, in relation to the unconverted, was, as far as Scripture reveals it, *somewhat different* from that which obtains among ourselves. We cannot find a single text which would lead us to believe that the Apostles ever regarded the salvation of any one man as *dependent*

* We think it better to withhold the name of the writer from whom we quote, in order that the passages may be regarded rather as *representative* of prevailing forms of thought, than as the sentiments of an individual.

on the conduct of another; that they ever thought sinners died eternally because saints were too cold or too careless to pray; or that the wicked perished everlastingly because God, in His sovereign pleasure, kept back anything, compatible with moral agency, that was *essential* to their conversion.

The question then returns, "In what aspect did they regard either the world or the Church?"

We reply fearlessly, *As a great mystery.* Yet—and here it is they differ so widely from ourselves—not as a *painful* mystery. The mystery was indeed one which had been "kept secret since the world began," but it was also one which was "now made known to all nations for the obedience of faith" (Rom. xvi. 25, 26). It was a mystery with which Paul had been made acquainted by special "revelation" (Eph. iii. 3); and it was one which he regarded as *glorious riches*—"the riches of God's glory" (Eph. iii. 16; Col. i. 27); one which, far from bringing over his soul the profound gloom that crushes us as with a darkness that may be felt, was a perennial source of joy and strength.

We are quite aware that the passages to which we refer are ordinarily expounded as simply referring to the call of the Gentiles, because St. Paul, immediately after speaking of "the mystery," goes on to say, "that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs." A little reflection will, however, suffice to show that such an interpretation cannot embrace *the entire meaning* of the Apostle,

for *this* was revealed from the beginning to Abraham, as St. Paul himself tells us in the Epistle to the Galatians (iii. 8); besides which, it had been clearly predicted by Isaiah that Messiah was to be "a light to lighten the Gentiles." Indeed, the Jews fully recognized this fact, for "the Passover itself was as free to Gentile strangers living in the midst of Israel, as to the Israelites themselves"* (Exod. xii. 48, 49).

Neither can "the mystery" be (as is commonly supposed) the admission of the Gentiles into the Church, *without their submission to Jewish rites*, for this, however unpalatable to the Jew, was not a hidden mystery, waiting to be "made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." Further, the revelation concerning this point was not made to Paul, but to Peter, six years after the conversion of Paul; whereas, the mystery referred to was, as we are told, by special revelation made known *to Paul*.

We do not see, therefore, how "the mystery" *can* be anything else than the superseding of the Jewish nation as the elect of God, by the calling out, in room thereof, of "the Church of the First-born," composed of Gentiles as well as Jews; for St. Paul says to the Colossians in plain terms, the mystery "*is*, Christ in you the hope of glory."

That this calling of an elect Church out of every tongue and nation was a "hidden mystery," one which had been "kept secret since the world began," is

* "The Mystery of the Gentile Dispensation," by Ridley H. Herschell.

evident enough; for no hint whatever is given in the Old Testament of any such intermediate dispensation between the coming of Christ and the final accomplishment of the purposes of that coming. The Prophets tell us, indeed, that Messiah would be rejected and despised, but they never intimate that this rejection was to last above 1,800 years, during which time the Church of the First-born would be gathered.

But *how*, it will be said, could *this* be to the Apostle any source of consolation? How could he see "the riches of the glory" of God, in a dispensation of selection rather than of universality? How could he reconcile such a "revelation" with the glowing predictions of the Old Testament prophets? How could he perceive in such a result the fulfilment of what he himself repeatedly calls "the hope of Israel"?

It is obvious that he could only do so by regarding the *present* calling of the Elect Church as the pledge and earnest of a *subsequent* and final triumph over Satan and all his devices. That *he did so regard it* is clearly indicated in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, where he connects together two things which we are very apt to dissociate,—the predestination of the elect, and the salvation of mankind. God, he says, "hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world," . . . "that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth (things visible and invisible), even in Him."

*

How this may be accomplished without adopting universalist theories,—without, in short, any violation of the teaching of Scripture relative to the final doom of the impenitent,—will be shown in due time. For the present, we would only observe that many of the most Evangelical and devout students of prophecy, both living and dead, have long held that the offers of the Gospel extend *beyond* this dispensation; that "the completed salvation of the Elect Church, instead of closing the fountains of Divine love, *will introduce a wider and fuller display of it;*" * and that "redemption is not more narrow and limited in its capabilities than creation."

To these testimonies we propose *to direct attention* in our next paper, which will be entitled EXPECTATIONS. After this we shall subject them to examination by the unerring standard of Holy Scripture.

A.

* "Outlines of Unfulfilled Prophecy," by the Rev. T. R. Birks, M.A., pp. 147 and 151.

PROPHECY.

"It is better, incomparably better, to study prophecy, and make mistakes in the interpretation, than not to study prophecy for fear of making mistakes: in the latter case we run directly counter to God's bidding; in the former *we do what we can*, and such effort, whether directed to the obedience of truth, or its investigation, never was, and never will be, without a blessing."—*Rev. Capel Molyneux.*

No. 6.

JAMES v. 15, "*The prayer of faith shall save the sick.*"

COMMENTATORS.—"The prayer which proceedeth from that faith to which God granted the power of working miracles."—(*Holden*, quoted by Bloomfield.) "It lies as a duty upon sick people to send for ministers, and to desire their assistance and prayers. There must be faith, both in the person praying and in the person prayed for. In a time of sickness it is not the cold and formal prayer that is effectual, but *the prayer of faith*."—(*Matt. Henry.*) "Shall *save*," says Mr. Alford (in reply to Roman Catholic interpreters), "can only be used here of *corporeal healing*, not of the salvation of the soul." Protestants generally deal with this text controversially, receiving it as a promise, but denying the necessity of anointing with oil, and refusing to admit therefrom any justification of extreme unction.

THE real question is, Do the words in question embody *a promise to us* or not? It is impossible to imagine phraseology more definite. If the prayer offered *be* the prayer of faith, we are told it *shall* save the sick, *i. e.*, *save life* from the danger to which it is exposed through the sickness. There can be no doubt that the text is continually pleaded before God by multitudes *as a promise;* that expectations of the recovery of sick friends are frequently founded upon it; and that, when disappointment follows, a painful sense of doubt comes over the soul, concealed as much as possible by exclamations on the inscrutable and mysterious providence of God.

Now we are far from saying that no sick person was ever raised up in answer to prayer; for one instance, at least, is certainly recorded. We refer, of course, to the prayer of Hezekiah that he might not die. That of David for his child should also be noticed. In the first of these cases the prayer was granted. In the second, it was refused. But in both there was obviously a believing hope that God

would interfere, and, in answer to earnest supplication, lengthen life. Let it, however, be distinctly noted that Hezekiah seems to have *regarded* the particular sickness in question in the light of punishment (Isa. xxxviii. 12, 13); he pleads his integrity as the reason why his life should be prolonged (ver. 3); and that the Lord admits the plea, and *specially* raises him up, appears by the message of Isaiah, and the miracle by which it was confirmed (Isa. xxxviii. 5—8). In David's case, we are distinctly told that the child was *judicially* struck (2 Sam. xii. 15), and on this account it was that David so besought God on its behalf.

The errors into which we fall from not separating the *judicial acts* of God, on the one hand, and his *miraculous interferences* on the other, from the operation of the ordinary laws of nature, are both manifold and mischievous. The inexorable law, in accordance with which "one generation passeth away, and another cometh," is *now* not a curse, but a blessing. The invariable working of that law, involving, as it does, the cutting off of men at *every* period of life, and *therefore* frequently at the very moment when continued existence seems to survivors to be almost essential,—is of all laws perhaps the most merciful and benevolent. Interference with it, in answer to prayer, would be one of the greatest curses that could be inflicted on mankind. Hence we are justified in saying that God in His mercy no more interferes, on behalf of His children, with the ordinary laws under which men sicken and die, than He interferes to save missionaries from plague or shipwreck. And if Christians cannot *hear* this truth without having their faith shaken in the love of God and the power of prayer, they have need to re-learn the very elements of the Gospel. St. Paul says nothing about special

prayer for Trophimus, whom he leaves sick; and while he gratefully acknowledges the mercy of God in raising up Epaphroditus, lest he should be crushed by over-much sorrow, he receives his recovery, not as an anticipated reply to the prayer of faith, but as a sovereign and unexpected mercy.

What then, it will be said, is the meaning of the passage before us? We reply, precisely that which any intelligent reader of the Bible would take up if he simply recollected the actual condition of the Church at the time it was written,—a condition in which some persons, as Ananias and Sapphira, were struck dead for their sins; and others, such as those alluded to by St. Paul, were "weak" and "sickly," or delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh (1 Cor. v. 3—5). Under such circumstances, the elders being sent for, the prayer of faith being offered, and *the sin*, on account of which the disease was inflicted, *having been confessed to them all*, the man's life was saved,—the Lord raised him up, and the special sin, whatever it might be, was forgiven. The reference to Elias, as having by his prayer brought rain, is alone *proof* that a special and not an ordinary state of things was in the mind of the Apostle.

To exercise faith in a supposed promise, when no such promise has in reality been given, is to confound truth and falsehood,—to undermine all real trust,—and to make God appear as if He were a deceiver. Why cannot we be content to pray for absolute and happy *acquiescence* in the Divine will? Why should we imagine it to be *desirable* that in anything the *expression* of God's wisdom and love should be *modified* to meet our *supposed* special need? What is this, but to baptize our faithlessness with the name of faith?

L.

THE MINISTER.

COUNT AGENOR DE GASPARIN AND DR. MERLE D'AUBIGNÉ.

Chapter IV.—Gentile Ministry.

HITHERTO, as we have seen, the preaching of the Gospel by St. Paul had formed a part of the ordinary synagogue service; and, generally speaking, he seems to have been heard, not only with patience, but with considerable acceptance. Now persecution commences, and he and his companions flee into Lycaonia, where they still preach, but probably in the open air, and without any of the ordinary accompaniments of worship.

Returning again to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, we find them, apparently for the first time, organizing. They *ordain elders* in every church (Acts xiv. 23), commending them in prayer to the Lord, on whom they believed. The question is, Who, or what, were these elders? It is remarkable that they do not appear to have been endowed by the Apostle with any special gifts, nor is there anything to indicate that they were separated from secular employments. They would certainly seem to be persons chosen, on account of their fitness to rule, to fulfil duties more or less corresponding to those of the Jewish elders.

At Thessalonica Paul is again in the synagogue, and there, for "three sabbath days, he reasoned out of the Scriptures" (Acts xvii. 1, 2). But again he is obliged to

fly. At Berea, for a time, the Jews hear him patiently, and many, after searching the Scriptures, avow their belief; but the scene terminates, as before, in flight. At Athens he preaches on Mars Hill. At Corinth he is once more in the synagogue, but, again encountering opposition, he retires to the house of a devout man, where he remains for eighteen months, teaching the Word of God among them, and supporting himself by his occupation as a tent-maker (Acts xviii. 1—11).

At Ephesus, Apollos, an eloquent Jew, and mighty in the Scriptures, but unacquainted with any truth beyond that which was involved in the teaching of John the Baptist, meets Aquila and Priscilla, receives further instruction from them, and then, proclaiming Christ, mightily convinces the Jews of his Messiahship. On twelve of this man's converts Paul lays his hands at Ephesus, after which, we are told, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and "they spake with tongues and prophesied" (Acts xix. 1—7). But not a hint is given that either Apollos or his instructors, or any of these twelve men, abandoned the ordinary occupations of life, or in any other particular changed their position.

Here Paul remained nearly three years. Three months of this time he spent in the synagogue, and the rest in "disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus," supporting himself during the whole time, so far as appears, by the labour of his hands. At Troas we find him in an upper room, breaking bread with the disciples, preaching to them, and continuing his speech until midnight; and then we have his touching farewell, at Miletus, to the elders of the church at Ephesus.

Here, if anywhere, we should expect to see the *official*

character of the pastors fully recognized. And so it is. But in what way? Chiefly in the way of warning them against "grievous wolves,"—evidently men greedy of gain, who, after his departure, would come amongst them; and in exhorting them to imitate the disinterestedness he had himself manifested, by labouring as he had done, *not only for their own support*, but for the necessities of those who had not energy enough to imitate their example (Acts xx. 28—35).

What can be clearer than that, up to this time at least—nearly thirty years after Pentecost—not the slightest trace is to be found of anything at all corresponding to the distinctions which now obtain between ministers and their people.

We now turn to the Epistles. To the Corinthians Paul says, "Am I not an Apostle?" Did not God, under the law, provide for the maintenance of those who were entirely devoted to the work of the sanctuary? Hath not Christ himself recognized such a claim in those who serve Him (Luke x. 7)? Yet have I abandoned all such rights, and refrained from many other things too, that I might have done, lest I should stumble any, or cause my good to be evil spoken of. "*Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ*" (1 Cor. xi. 1).

In the Epistle to the Ephesians (iv. 11) he refers somewhat at large to Divine gifts,—not exclusively to those which were miraculous, and therefore temporary, but to qualifications bestowed on Evangelists as one class, and on pastors and teachers as another class, who were *permanently* to be employed "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come, in the unity of the faith and the knowledge

of the Son of God, unto a perfect man." But nothing indicates that persons having such gifts are to be separated from their brethren, or to abstain from secular pursuits.

In writing to the Philippians, he addresses them distinctly as having "bishops* and deacons" (ver. 1), and speaks of Nymphas at Laodicea as having "a Church in his house." The Thessalonians he exhorts, *without exception*, "to be quiet, to do their own business, and to work with their own hands, as they had been commanded" (iv. 11),—to "edify one another" (v. 11), and *to esteem very highly those who were over them in the Lord*" (v. 13); exhortations which seem to indicate that the elders, on the one hand, had been *unwisely* claiming the liberty to be freed from secular employments, and the people, on the other, had been neglecting to render due esteem to those who devoted themselves to spiritual service. It is impossible to suppose that the entire Christian community needed to be told that they must work, in one form or other, for their daily bread; the command to do so evidently refers to *a particular class of persons* who, in this way only, could "walk honestly," and have "lack of nothing." In the second Epistle (iii. 7—12), it is still more evident that he refers exclusively to teachers; for he again quotes the example he had himself set them, of labouring for his own support.

To Timothy, his friend and fellow-Evangelist, who, like himself, appears to have exercised the functions of an episcopos, or inspector, and, as such, to have had *the power of ordaining*, he gives rules for the choice both of elders and deacons, and reminds him of the speciality of his own

* The word "Bishop," in the Greek Churches, corresponded exactly to that of "Elder" in the Jewish ones.

position as one respecting whom prophecies had gone before (1 Ep. i. 18), and to whom some special gift had been imparted by divinely endowed persons. And here, for the first time, we have a distinct recognition not only of *the abstract right* of persons entirely devoted to the service of the Church to be supported by the brethren, but a direction to Timothy to see that this right was equitably admitted; he who rendered a double service being accounted worthy of a double stipend (v. 17, 18).

To Titus, also a fellow-Evangelist, and, like Timothy, specially appointed to "ordain elders," and set the Churches in order, the same instructions are repeated; while in the Epistle to the Hebrews (v. 12) believers generally are rebuked for not having become teachers of others, and yet at the same time commanded "to obey them that have the rule over them, since they are men who watch for souls as they that must give account" (xiii. 17); again plainly indicating that the right of teaching was not, like that of ruling, confined to any one individual or class.

In the General Epistle of James the warning given to the Church is against cherishing an inordinate love of teaching,—"My brethren, be not many masters or teachers" (iii. 16); and the office of "elder" is again distinctly recognized. So it is by Peter, but with this special charge, that "the oversight" of the flock is to be taken by them, "not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock" (1 Pet. v. 2, 3).

The substance of the whole teaching of the New Testament, in reference to the question at issue, appears to be this:—

i. That the Apostles, as inspired men, not only *taught*

truth authoritatively, but also exercised a direct and positive authority over the Churches they founded,—ordaining elders, enforcing discipline, and demanding obedience.

ii. That Timothy and Titus, and probably many others, such as Barnabas, Apollos, Aquila, Mark, Luke, Epaphras, Aristarchus, Tychichus, Archippus, Silas, and Trophimus, called "fellow-labourers," "helpers," "companions in tribulation," &c., exercised, *by delegation*, similar authority under apostolic direction and control.

iii. That prophets and teachers, specially and miraculously endowed for the purpose with spiritual gifts, exercised such gifts in the Church, each according to the particular endowment he had received of God.

iv. That "elders," called in the Greek Churches "bishops," ruled in each several community of believers; that in proportion to the claim made upon their time, they were remunerated by those to whom they ministered,—the principle being always recognized that "the labourer is worthy of his hire;" but they were never interdicted from following secular employments. Further, throughout the entire document, *the moral and spiritual advantage of gratuitous service* is constantly pressed upon attention, both by precept and example; and attention to it, in some instances, is positively commanded.

Here the witness of the New Testament terminates, and with it what may be termed the Apostolic Church,—the first or *Jewish phase* of the Church's history.

Prophetically, there are glances, not a few, into the future; but they are all dark, and, singularly enough, they almost all point to a time when men shall make merchandise of religion. The following passages will indicate what is meant:—

Acts xx. 29—"For I know that after my departure shall grievous (or rather, *burdensome*) wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock."

Cor. ii. 17—"For we are not, *as many* (already the evil had begun to work), which corrupt the word;" or rather, as Dean Trench reads it, "*make a traffic of the word.*"

Col. ii. 8—"Beware lest any man spoil you," or, as it should be, "*make booty of you*," "through philosophy" (pretended theology).

2 Thess. ii. 3, 7—"That day shall not come, unless there come a falling away first." "The mystery of iniquity doth already work."

1 Tim. vi. 5—"Withdraw thyself" from men of "corrupt minds," who suppose that "gain is godliness;" or rather, according to the learned Dean of Westminster, that "*godliness is lucre,—a means of getting gain.*"

2 Tim. iv. 3—"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts (or fancies) shall they *heap to themselves teachers*, having itching ears,"—of course *paying for the luxury.*

2 Pet. ii. 3—"Through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you."

Jude 11—"Woe unto them," for "they have run greedily *after the error of Balaam for reward.*"

Rev. xviii. 10—13: "That great city," which "makes merchandise *of the bodies and souls of men.*"

In the next chapter, under the title of "THE FATHERS," we propose to trace the gradual development of the predicted apostacy.

E.

READINGS WITH A SCEPTIC.

§ 2, MATTHEW, Chap. i. 18—25.

Place, Nazareth. *Present*, Joseph.

An Angelic Announcement.

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise," &c., &c.

SCEPTIC.—Have the goodness now to say frankly, in what light you regard these statements.

Believer. I regard them as a simple narrative of what took place at Nazareth, probably about five years before the era we call "Anno Domini." The narrator must be supposed to have obtained the information he imparts from Joseph or Mary. His object is to show that the *birth* of this Prophet was not less extraordinary than his life; that, being miraculously announced and conceived, He was, even before His birth, specially marked out as a Saviour.

There is, to my mind, a touching beauty in the incidental reference made by the Evangelist to the *character* of Joseph, blending as it does justice and mercy—a sense of right or righteousness with tenderness and love. It is as if the genius of the coming Christianity were already casting its shadow before. It strikes me as worth notice, that mercifulness, kindness, benevolence, seem to be always included in the Divine idea of a just or righteous man. The notion of justice, as *opposed* to tenderness or mercy, finds no sanction in the Gospel of Christ. The justice of godlike

men, like the justice of God himself, is but love on a large and comprehensive scale.

Sc. Allow me to ask, What could Joseph possibly understand by this child being intended to "save His people *from their sins*," that notion of a Messiah having no root in the Jewish mind?

B. The announcement, that He was to "save His people* from their sins," he probably could not comprehend; but he would at least learn this, that the mission of the wondrous Babe was not carnal, but spiritual; that He was not to be a mere earthly ruler, but a deliverer from evil: and he would thus be warned against the prevailing notion that Messiah was to be a temporal Saviour.

Sc. You must bear with me now, if I tread on what is to you, I doubt not, very sacred ground. I have frequently turned to the passage in Isaiah quoted in the 23rd verse, but I really cannot understand it. The prophecy seems clearly enough to refer to events which were to take place within two or three years of the time when it was uttered,—"before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good." But if so, a miraculous conception took place *then;* in which case, it is *a fact* that is recorded, and not a prophecy.

If you deny any miraculous conception in Isaiah's time,

* "In the primary sense *the Jews*, of whom alone Joseph could have understood the words; but, in the deeper sense, all who believe on Him. It is remarkable, that in this early part of the evangelic history, in the midst of pedigrees and the disturbance of thrones by the supposed temporal king of the Jews, we have so clear an indication of *the spiritual nature of the office of Christ.* One circumstance of this kind outweighs a thousand cavils against the historical reality of the narration. Ἁμαρτια is not put for the *punishment of sin*, but is the sin itself—the practice of sin in its most pregnant sense."—*Alford.*

and explain (as some do) "virgin" to mean bride and future wife, then I do not see how a birth in the ordinary way can be predictive of a miraculous one. I am quite sure, and I wish to say it with all reverence, that, to any ordinary reader, and apart from this application of the passage by Matthew, it would be supposed to relate to events in the time of Ahaz, and to have no connection whatever with Messiah.

B. I have no wish to conceal the fact that Scripture, like all other ancient books, has its difficulties: I think this is one. I agree with you, that the application of the passage to Christ must rest on the authority of the Evangelist, rather than on any obvious connection apparent in the context.

The passage in Isaiah (ch. vii. 14) is certainly very obscure. I feel, however, no hesitation in setting aside any idea of a miraculous conception in the time of the Prophet—*that* is, I think, quite out of the question. Neither can I feel satisfied to read "virgin" as bride; *this* also destroys the application of the prophecy. The most probable conjecture is, that the portion relating to Messiah finishes with the fifteenth verse of Isaiah's seventh chapter; and that the *sixteenth* verse (which should be read, not the child, but *this* child) refers to Isaiah's own child, *Shear-jashub*, which, as appears by the third verse, he was to take with him for a sign.

Probably this text was one of those dark sayings in the Prophet, over which the devout Jew had often pondered; able, doubtless, to perceive that it had no immediate fulfilment, but not discerning what it could mean. Matthew, supposed to be under a special teaching from above, expounds it of Christ.

Sc. This is not satisfactory; but I am content to leave the matter thus, at least for the present. But allow me to ask, Do you understand the Evangelist to assert that the miraculous conception took place *in order that* this prophecy might be fulfilled?

B. Certainly not. The event did not take place for the mere purpose of fulfilling the prophecy; rather, God, having predetermined the event, foretold it by the Prophet; and the Evangelist, divinely instructed, points out the accordance of the event with the prediction, after its occurrence.

Sc. One more question: If Joseph was not really the father of Christ, why should so much pains have been taken to give us *his* genealogy? One would naturally have supposed, in such a case, that of Mary was needed.

B. That Mary belonged to the royal line, as well as Joseph, is shown in the genealogy given by Luke; but since Joseph was, by the Jews, always *supposed* to be the father of Christ; since he really was such, *in the eye of the law;* and since Jesus Himself never denied or disputed the relationship, it was obviously necessary to show that Joseph was of royal descent, and Christ *legally* of the house and lineage of David. This accordingly was done. T.

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[*All communications for the Editor should be addressed to* No. 14, Bartholomew Close, Aldersgate Street, London, E.C.]

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at,—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints, as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine.*

EXPECTATIONS.

WE have already seen that St. Paul regarded his *special work*, as the Apostle to the Gentiles, to be the calling out of a people from every nation under heaven, who should form part of that elect body, which is elsewhere spoken of as "the Lamb's wife," and "the Church of the First-Born;" that he nowhere anticipates any very extended or universal diffusion of truth as the result of his labours; and that he

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always speaks of his converts as "chosen before the foundation of the world" —"called to be saints"—"beloved of God,"—and such like.

Three things, however, are distinctly noticeable in connection with this view of his life-work. The *first* is, the absence of all pretension to know anything about the secret counsels of God, either as to *who* the elect were, or *where* they were to be found. He, therefore, preaches the Gospel, so far as his ability extends, to every creature; and he only speaks of those who accept it as "elect," when he has reasonable evidence that they are sincere believers.

The *second* is, a persuasion that it was quite possible, both for himself and his converts, to be mistaken as to the fact of their being among the chosen; for the "calling and election" on which he dwells is one that is to be made "sure" (2 Pet. i. 10); sustained by consistency of life; proved by perseverance to the end (Rev. ii. 26). Hence he speaks of a possible falling away of some who had "tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come," and says of such, it "is impossible to renew them again unto repentance" (Heb. vi. 6); and while he regards all his converts as being numbered among those whose "names are written in heaven" (Heb. xii. 23), he doubtless held, that there were entries in that book which would at last be blotted out by the Judge of all (Exod. xxxii. 33; Rev. iii. 5). Even of himself he says, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached

to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Cor. ix. 27). Not that, in such a case, he contemplated eternal misery as his doom; rather, degradation from the "high calling" of Christ Jesus—rejection from the honour and dignity which otherwise might have been attained.

The *third* is, that he never aims at anything less than the conversion of souls to Christ. He never regards the Gospel as a mere instrument of civilization; he never even refers to its secondary influences in the world, blessed as they unquestionably were; he has but one message for *all* men,—"Repent, and believe the Gospel;" but one remedy for all disorders, —union to Christ, the Saviour of the world.

But now the question comes, "Did Paul suppose, as we seem to do, that the Gospel has no work to accomplish on the earth beyond the *salvation* of the elect, and the *condemnation* of those who reject its offers of mercy?" We frankly say, we think he did not. To us it seems plain that he looked much further; that, while on the one hand he regarded the good news of the grace of God as *primarily* intended to "separate a peculiar people," and to make them "zealous of good works," he believed that ultimately this same Gospel would *bless the race;* not, indeed, every individual of it, for he always recognizes the eternal ruin of the wilfully impenitent, but the race *as a whole;* and that, consequently, everything a real Christian did and said in the spirit of his Master tended to prepare multitudes of the unconverted for higher developments in the age that is to come.

Nor are we singular, as we have already shown, in the belief that Scripture teaches that the salvation of the Gospel extends far beyond the present dispensation. The late excellent Edward Bickersteth always maintained that "there may be a thousand stages and varieties of union with Christ, *distinguishable from* the glory of the Church of the First-Born;" and Mr. Birks, his son-in-law and successor, has repeated the same conviction as his own, in a variety of forms.

"We cannot," he says, "compare the descriptions in the New Testament of the strait gate, the narrow way, the few that enter therein, the little flock to whom the kingdom is to be given, with the glowing promises of enlargement, peace, prosperity, and abundance, in the Old Testament Prophets, and not receive the impression of *a total contrast;* so that the same parties cannot possibly be intended in these two opposite portraitures of the servants of God."*

In another place he argues, that in Scripture

"There is a strong intimation that the completed salvation of the Elect Church, instead of closing the fountains of Divine love, *will introduce a wider and fuller display of it.*"† He asks, "Is Redemption more narrow and limited in its capabilities than Creation?" "What person," he exclaims, "not blinded by the habits of thought engendered by human tradition, would suppose that the salvation of the Bride (the Elect Church) was a term equivalent in breadth and compass to the creating of all things new?"‡ "To say that Christ can bestow no spiritual blessedness upon any creature whom

* "Outlines of Prophecy," p. 143. † *Ibid.* p. 147. ‡ *Ibid.* p. 141.

He does not admit to the special intimacy of a bridal union, is, of itself, a preposterous and incredible statement."*

And again :—

"All past analogy, as well as the direct revelations of prophecy, *forbid* us to look for absolute and unmingled judgment without any further revelation of forbearance and grace."† "The law given by Moses was a message of justice and severity. But even here, the tones of mercy were not entirely wanting. The tables broken through the wickedness of the people were restored by an act of Divine grace, and were prefaced with that declaration of the name of Jehovah in which mercy rejoices against justice. The same harmony of the Divine attributes appears in the Gospel. Mercy is its predominant and delightful character; yet it has under-tones of holiness, like the voice of the law, and even still more solemn and severe."‡ "Shall we call that view of Redemption," he says, "attractive" (Dr. Brown, in controversy, seems to have asserted that it was), "which makes it result only in the salvation of a small minority of mankind, while the great majority sink into eternal ruin, and the existence of the race ceases for ever?"§

Charged with favouring the doctrine of universal restitution, Mr. Birks replies :—

"Instead of countenancing Universalism, this doctrine robs it of its chief plausibility."‖ "It may be asserted, indeed, with far greater truth, that Universalism will never receive its death-blow among the children of light and love, until this doctrine has been received."¶

That the view in question has yet, and will long

* "Outlines of Prophecy," p. 152. † *Ibid.* p. 168. ‡ *Ibid.* p. 167.
§ *Ibid.* p. 374. ‖ *Ibid.* p. 356. ¶ *Ibid.* p. 357.

have, to contend with an universal amount of prejudice, no one seems to be more aware than Mr. Birks. Its advocates must be prepared, he says, to encounter no little obloquy, unless they will bury their convictions in silence.

"The time, however, seems to be come, when the sacrifice ought to be made. It is important in these days that the faith and hope of Christians should be confirmed and enlarged, by clearing away those rooted prejudices. I believe that aversion results only from superficial habits of thought, or the unsuspected and baleful working of spiritual selfishness. The doctrine, rightly understood, is in *full harmony* with the repeated statements of Scripture, the discoveries of science, and *the deepest instincts of the regenerate heart.* It reconciles contrasted truths, which form the component elements of all sound theology, while it opens an immense vista of glorious hope, where goodness is seen triumphing over evil. In short, it forms a glorious keystone to the arch of Divine revelation, while it shows us how the streams of Providence, widening as they flow, discharge themselves into an ocean of unfathomable and eternal love."*

But here we must guard ourselves against even the appearance of misrepresentation, by observing, once for all, that the above statements are, in the minds of their authors, *indissolubly connected* with the peculiar views they hold on unfulfilled prophecy. With these schemes we have now no concern whatever. We simply take *the great principle involved*—the extension of mercy by and through the Gospel of Christ

* "Outlines of Prophecy," p. 332.

beyond this dispensation, just as it is stated; and we do so without any reference to its supposed application only to persons who may be born *after* the second coming of Christ, and *after* the resurrection of the saints.

We can see no reason whatever for such a conclusion. Dr. McNeile, of Liverpool, unhesitatingly asserts, in the "Bloomsbury Lectures" for 1849, that Scripture warrants us to expect that "the millions of the heathen who have never heard, and of course have never rejected, the Gospel," will have the way of salvation made known to them in the world or age that is to come.* Dr. Maitland and others hold views still more enlarged, and include in this future probation,—if so it may be called,—not the heathen only, but the myriads who have passed away in infancy; the *hundred millions*† of human beings who, in consequence of a defective physical formation, have lived and died incapable of distinguishing right from wrong; and finally *all* those, let them be found where they may, who, in consequence of their ignorance or weakness, or from other circumstances known only to God, have not *consciously* rejected Christ; who, though not conquerors, are yet not devils; sinners and sufferers through the temptations of Satan, but scarcely his

* Quoted from Heath's "Future Human Kingdom of Christ," vol. i. p. 325.

† "It is now well known that one out of every thousand of our species is born in idiocy. This would show, on the supposed population of the world since Adam, the astounding result of a hundred millions of our race who will rise from the dead without, in this life, having ever known right from wrong."—*Heath*, vol. i. p. 59.

conscious agents; men who have too often submitted to evil, who have never resisted it as they ought to have done, yet not fairly to be classed with those who love and choose iniquity.

Such and so magnificent is the view that in this aspect opens before us of THE MISSION FIELD OF THE CHURCH AFTER THE RESURRECTION.*

We pause here, for a moment, to contemplate so glorious a termination of the miseries of earth, the malice of Satan, and the mysteries of Providence. What if it should indeed *be* so! What if, after all our stumbling, and rebellion, and questionings about Divine sovereignty, it should at length be made manifest that God has but chosen His elect under the Gospel, as He chose Israel of old under the Law, only the more wonderfully to "make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom;" that He that loved His people, and "washed them from their sins in His own blood, and made them kings and priests unto God and His Father," has done this, only to make them, *in other states of existence* as well as in this, "co-workers"

* The thought may perhaps cross some minds, "Would it be possible for all who have lived since the creation to exist together (even in resurrection bodies) on the surface of the earth?" "The calculation necessary to be made, in order to inquire whether or not this is so, necessarily contains many doubtful quantities, but the result is curious. It gives about five hundred to a square mile, or more than an acre to each individual. If I remember right, this is less than the density of the present population of Great Britain."—*Heath*, vol. i. p. 348, 349.

with Him in elevating and blessing a multitude, so vast, that the mind of man cannot conceive it, nor any human arithmetic calculate its number?

What if then the words of Christ should find their plain and natural signification, "He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations;" and while to one it should be said, "Thou good servant, because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities;" and to another, "Be thou also over five cities;" *these,* and many other promises (then found to be not figuratively, but literally true), should establish every word of the living God, and prove all alike to be marked by wisdom and by love? Will it not be said of us, as it was of the Jews of old, "*O slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!*"

Before concluding this paper, let us state clearly and distinctly the question at issue. It is neither more nor less than this—"Did the Apostles regard the present dispensation as necessarily *shutting up* every human being now living, and all who ever have lived, from the creation to the present time, either to eternal blessedness on the one hand, or to eternal misery on the other?" Admitting, as every Christian must do that there is no salvation out of Christ, the question remains, "*Is there salvation out of the Church?*"—using that term, not in the Romanist sense, but as including the elect of all ages. *This it is* which remains to be decided.

Let no one imagine that the inquiry is a speculative one. It is, on the contrary, eminently practical. Its decision, if contrary to received views, would, before long, unquestionably modify a great part of our modern theology. It would modify many of our expectations in relation to the world at large. It would alter many of the judgments of Christians in relation to themselves.

With these considerations, however, and many others which might be urged of equal importance, we have *now* nothing to do. Our *one* question is, "*What saith the Scripture?*" The answer given by that Holy Oracle we propose, in part at least, to furnish in our next paper, under the title of THE RESURRECTION. A.

INTERPRETATION.—No. 7.

1 TIM. IV. 10, "*We trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.*"

"ALL men,"—*not* every human being, do what he will, and live as he may; for this would set aside the most express statements of Scripture, and be inconsistent with that amount of freedom which is essential to moral agency: but the race *regarded as a whole*,—all mankind, excepting only those who wilfully and perversely destroy themselves (Acts xiii. 46). "*Specially those that believe*," *i.e.*, the Church, in a higher and nobler sense,—for greater honour and dignity, as the Elect of God and the Bride of Christ.

To say, as many do, that "Saviour" here only means temporal preserver, or to maintain with others that it simply implies *the offer* of salvation, is neither more nor less than EVANGELICAL RATIONALISM. L.

THE MINISTER.

COUNT AGÉNOR DE GASPARIN AND DR. MERLE D'AUBIGNÉ.

Chapter V.—The Fathers.

THE second phase of the Church's history is that which it assumed under the Fathers. And here we are thrown at once upon an age which is justly termed the *obscure period* of Church history; for it is a period with which, comparatively speaking, we have little acquaintance.

Yet that little is assuredly of no ordinary interest. For the period in question, viz., from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus (A.D. 96 to 180), embracing, as it does, the hundred years that immediately succeeded the decease of the Apostle John, is *the one* in which Christianity achieved its greatest triumphs, and underwent its greatest changes.

The state of the Roman empire at this time is described by Gibbon as being singularly felicitous. He calls it a golden age,—the period during which the condition of the human race was more happy and prosperous than during any other.

The outward condition of the Church was in the main scarcely less satisfactory; for persecution had now ceased to ravage it, and mankind were consenting witnesses of its quiet but triumphant march from victory to victory. By the promulgation of Christianity during this century, "a visible and hopeful impression was made upon the senti-

means and practices of perhaps a half of the community in all countries around the Mediterranean."*

But it was also the period of the *greatest change* that Christianity has ever undergone; viz., the change from what it was in the days of the Apostles to what it became in the age of the Fathers,—"from Christianity as we see it in the New Testament, to Christianity as we see it in the next century, and as, to a certain extent, we have seen it ever since."

"No other change equally momentous has ever since affected its fortunes, yet none has ever been so silent and secret. The stream, in that most critical moment of its passage from the everlasting hills to the plain below, is lost to our view at the very point where we are most anxious to watch it: we may hear its struggles under the over-arching rocks; we may catch its spray on the boughs that overlap its course; but the torrent itself we see not, or see only by imperfect glimpses. It is not so much a period for ecclesiastical *history* as for ecclesiastical controversy and conjecture. A fragment here, an allegory there; romances of unknown authorship; a handful of letters, of which the genuineness of every portion is contested inch by inch; the summary examination of a Roman magistrate; the pleadings of one or two Christian apologists; customs and opinions in the very act of change; last, but not least, the faded paintings, the broken sculptures, the rude epitaphs in the darkness of the catacombs,—these are the scanty, yet, perhaps, from their very scantiness, the attractive materials out of which the early Church must be reproduced, as it was working its way, in the literal sense of the word, *under-ground*,—under camp and palace, under senate

* Isaac Taylor's "Ancient Christianity."

and forsaken,—as unknown, yet well known; as dying, and, behold, it lives."

"This chasm once cleared, we find ourselves approaching the point where the story of the Church once more becomes history,—becomes once more the history, not of an isolated community or of isolated individuals, but of an organized society, incorporated with the political systems of the world." *

Into the subsequent development of that history,—its full-blown corruptions,—its final triumph over Paganism in the Roman empire,—its subjection of the Gothic hordes,—and its culmination in the Papacy,—it is not intended here to enter. The story is a sad one, and has been often told. What we really want to know is, not the extent of the evil, but the source from whence it sprang; not the *magnitude* of the wandering, but the precise point at which divergence commenced.

In order to ascertain this, it becomes necessary first of all to inquire, "What was the root and groundwork of the Christianity preached by the Apostles?"

Peter's first sermon supplies the answer. It was *the gift of the Holy Ghost.* "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."†

This was the grand peculiarity of the dispensation; *this* the "good news," that Christ was risen indeed, and the Holy Ghost the Comforter was now ready to take up,—

* Stanley's Introductory Lecture on "Ecclesiastical History."

† Acts ii. 38, 39.

nay, had already taken up,—his abode in the heart of every faithful follower of Christ, as the spirit of love, of purity, and of gladness. The early believer *experienced* this blessing. By it he was *purified*, and, being purified, became able to investigate truth honestly and without prejudice. By it he was *disposed* gladly and thankfully to receive all those great truths which at once form the basis and sustain the superstructure of the religious life. By it he was *united* to Christ, and being thus kept in immediate and constant contact with his Lord, was preserved from doubt, and filled with joy and peace in believing.

But scarcely a century rolls away after the death of the last of the Apostles, before we discover that all this is changed. We wake up, as it were, from a dream, and find, to our amazement, that the doctrine of the indwelling Spirit has departed; that man has taken the place of God; that the "law of liberty" has been superseded by the claims of an outward and authoritative Church; that all the conditions of human responsibility in relation to the attainment of Divine truth have, in fact, been altered; that Jewish, and, in some instances, Pagan ideas have supplanted Christian ones, and that the light and liberty of the Gospel have suddenly disappeared amid the shadows and ordinances of the earlier dispensation.

Well may we ask, "*How* has all this come about? By what strange concurrence of circumstances has it become possible thus to change the entire character of the Gospel, and to *undo* the work even of its inspired founders?"

The key to the mystery may be found in the Epistle to the Galatians, indicating, as it does, the tendency manifested even then by the converts to imagine that "having begun

in the Spirit," they were to be "made perfect by the flesh." Very striking is it,—nay, very affecting,—to observe, that even those who had come out of heathenism,—those who had been accounted under the Jewish dispensation only as "slaves," and were now, by the Gospel, made "sons of God,"—were yet quite as anxious as others to go back. "*When ye knew not God*," says the Apostle to such men, "ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods;" *that* one can understand, for ye did it ignorantly; "but now, after that ye have known God (or rather, are known of God), how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements (of your first proselytism), whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days and months and times and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain."*

That this tendency, in spite alike of Apostolic warnings and entreaties, went on increasing, there is very little reason to doubt. Teachers and taught, in this respect, acted and re-acted on each other. The people delighted in the exaltation of their ministers, and Presbyters were but too ready to assert that, as ministers of Christ, they had succeeded to the character, rights, and privileges of the Jewish priesthood.

It is no answer to this to say that the bishops of the second and third centuries were CHRISTIAN HEROES, rejoicing to die for the flocks over which they ruled. It is nothing to the point to urge, however truly, that a self-denying fanaticism, rather than luxury and covetousness, marked this era. It is vain to say that Chrysostom, even so late as in the fourth century, speaks of the life of the country minister as one of *manual labour*, and describes

* Gal. iv. 8—11.

him as yoking oxen, guiding the plough, and cutting the furrow; for so long as Christianity was an unlawful religion, there could not be *in poor districts* any regular provision for a minister; and until the Church was rich enough to provide for the clergy out of endowments or fees, no other form of existence than that described was possible. It is enough for our purpose to know that by the time of Cyprian,* or even earlier, the bishops considered themselves as invested with a rank and character similar to those of the High Priest among the Jews, while the presbyters were regarded as representing the Priests, and the deacons the Levites; that *wherever it was possible*, the entire clerical body was supported by the people; that the Lord's Supper had been converted into a sacrifice; that decrees of councils were enforced as laws; that the grossest superstitions were practised; that monkery and every other form of fanaticism prevailed; and that Apostolic principles and practices were all but universally disregarded.

How all this came about,—by what precise steps and stages it was accomplished,—at what exact period this or that innovation took place,—it is impossible to determine and vain to inquire. As we have said elsewhere, a time certainly came, and that probably very soon after the Apostles were removed, when, shrinking from the trouble, and doubtless the risk involved in such a position, men ceased to desire the office of a bishop "as a good work" (1 Tim. iii. 1), when they forgot the apostolic exhortation, and no longer fulfilled its duties "willingly, or of a ready mind," but left it to fall into hands exclusively devoted to the work, and professionally set apart for that purpose.

As a matter of inevitable necessity, power, by this pro-

* A.D. 248—258.

cess, soon became concentrated in few hands. The ardent, the courageous, and, owing to human infirmity, the ambitious, willingly grasped the reins which had been dropped by their more indolent or timid brethren, and quickly strengthened their position by gathering around the office all the influence that learning, oratory, and priestly claims could bring to bear on an ignorant and superstitious population.

As the village, the town, the city, or the province became in outward form and profession Christian, "practical heathenism retired, to work more silently and imperceptibly into the Christian system;" Christian morality became more and more divorced from Christian faith; heresy soon became almost the only crime; and in the desire to make an impression on the general tone and character of society, exaggerations of all kinds sprang into existence; religion became a mere engine of terror; and the moral elevation of each individual by truths which, rightly imparted, promote energy and self-reliance,—fill a man with noble thoughts and masculine virtues, making him at once a worshipper of Christ, and a follower of all righteousness, —was lost sight of in the eager desire to bring all mankind within the pale of the Church, however debasing or debilitating the process by which it might be accomplished.

The bearing of this state of things on the position of the clergy soon became obvious enough. Greece, it was said, had its official dignitaries for the performance of religious ceremonial; Rome had intertwined pontifical with civil functions; Judaism had always had its priests; why should not Christianity too have its sacred and learned aristocracy to direct worship—to rule public sentiment—to create and to control the opinion of the world? The Jewish priest

was the Jewish magistrate; why should not the Christian priest also be the Christian magistrate? and, if so, who so suitable for the higher offices of the Church as the converted noble or orator, advocate or judge?

And so it came to pass that when, after two centuries of strife and persecution, the open profession of Christianity became lawful in the Roman empire, all power was immediately vested in a sacerdotal class; and temples and altars, sacramental mysteries and scholastic refinements, alike attested the growth of a priesthood which, having first appropriated to itself every function in the Church, subsequently by and through the Church subjugated the world. For it should never be forgotten, that "the Christian hierarchy was completely organized, and established in the minds of men, *before* the great revolutions which, under Constantine, legalized Christianity, and under Theodosius and his successors identified the Church and State. The strength of the sacerdotal power was consolidated before it came into inevitable collision, or had to dispute its indefinable limits, with the civil authority. Mankind was now submitted to a double dominion, the civil supremacy of the emperor and his subordinate magistrates, and that of the bishop with his inferior priesthood."*

We propose next to consider THE APOLOGY which *might*, and probably would be offered for this state of things by those who were the chief instruments in bringing it about.

* Milman's "History of Latin Christianity."

E.

READINGS WITH A SCEPTIC.

§ 3, MATTHEW, Chap. II. 1—12.

The Birth of Christ.

"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea," &c., &c.

SCEPTIC.—I think you can scarcely refuse to admit that this is a very startling story. The wife of a poor Jewish carpenter, unknown to fame, gives birth to a son (as we read elsewhere) in a stable, at Bethlehem. Just at this time Eastern sages—astrologers apparently—arrive in Jerusalem, inquiring for an expected Jewish king, whose star they had seen. They go to the palace. All Jerusalem is in commotion. A council is summoned, and ancient prophecy searched. Bethlehem is pointed out as the destined birthplace of the long-expected Messiah. Thither they repair, and, guided by the meteor, find the house, and do homage to the infant Sovereign. All this seems to me *very unlikely*.

Believer. If you mean by its being a very startling story that it is an *incredible* one, I cannot agree with you. The narrative is in strict accordance with the general expectation, undoubtedly entertained at the time referred to, of a coming monarch.

The Magi, or Wise Men, were, I think, most probably

Jews, or Gentile proselytes,* from Arabia, who, seeking the learning of the East, had devoted themselves to its attainment and contemplation. Daniel, when in Babylon, was the chief of the Wise Men, the first of the Magians. These men, of course, shared in the anticipation of a coming king; and being devout men, which they doubtless were, there is nothing unreasonable in the supposition that the appearance of a meteor in the heavens (universally recognized in the East as an emblem of a rising power) should awaken in their minds thoughts of the expected deliverer,—recall to their memories the predictions of Balaam in the book of Numbers (xxiv. 17); and the prophecy, known in the East, of the seventy weeks in Daniel (ix. 24); and as it moved before them, finally be associated with the Pillar of Fire by which Israel had been led in the Wilderness: so that, strange as the whole account seems to us, everything was in perfect harmony with Jewish thought and feeling.

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§ 4.—Chap. ii. 13—23.

The Flight and the Massacre.

"And when they were departed, behold, the angel," &c., &c.

Sceptic. You will anticipate my difficulty. Herod is here said to have murdered all the children in the country under

* Many have supposed the Magi to be wise Persians, the system of the *Zend* containing remarkable germs of truth; as, for example, the idea of a *Zoziosh*, *i. e.*, an expected Redeemer. The ancient Church considered them to have been the representatives of the Gentile world, which, through them, did homage to our Lord,—a beautiful thought, though only conjectural.—(*See Olshausen and others.*)

two years old. Is that very likely? Not a word of this massacre, you know, is found in the history of Josephus,—an omission, to say the least of it, very remarkable. All this, as well as other events, seem to take place, so far as appears, only that two or three obscure and incomprehensible prophecies may thus find their fulfilment.

Believer. That the massacre by Herod should be unnoticed by Josephus is not, on consideration, so surprising as it appears on first sight. The number slain could not, according to the most reasonable computation, be above fifty,* even on the supposition, a very improbable one, that girls as well as boys were killed, these mostly the children of poor people, and all under two years old. That so trifling an event in the life of such a sanguinary tyrant as Herod should be omitted by the Jewish historian is not at all wonderful.

What you term "obscure and incomprehensible prophecies" *may be mere allusions* to passages in the prophetical writings which, by accommodation, illustrate the events narrated. This was a common Hebrew mode of quoting prophecy. The usual formula, "that it might be fulfilled," or "then was fulfilled," must, in these cases, be understood simply to mean,—*then was again applicable.*

It has been well observed that "the writings of the Jewish Prophets were the *classics* of the later Jews; and in subsequent ages, all their writers affected allusions to them. It was a familiar idiom of the Jews, when quoting the

* Voltaire, either from ignorance or dishonesty, asserts that *fourteen thousand* children must have lost their lives, and *thence* argues that the silence of Josephus is fatal to the narrative, forgetting, or rather choosing to ignore, the fact that, according to *his* computation, more children must have been born annually in the village of Bethlehem than there are either in Paris or London.

writings of the Old Testament, to say, 'That it might be fulfilled' which was spoken by such or such a Prophet; *not intending to be understood* that such a particular passage in one of the sacred books was ever designed to be *a real prediction* of what they were then relating, but signifying only that the words of the Old Testament might be properly adapted to express their meaning and illustrate their ideas.

"The Prophet Jeremiah, describing the miseries of captivity, by a beautiful figure represents Rachel as deploring the loss of her children, bathed in tears, piercing the air with loud lamentations, and indulging inconsolable grief. When Herod imbued his hands in the blood of the innocents in Bethlehem and its vicinity, how applicable were the Prophet's words to such a cruel scene, and how happily are they cited by the Evangelist, to exhibit to his reader the mourning and lamentation caused by that sanguinary tyrant! They are *a beautiful quotation*, but not a prediction of what then happened. There are upwards of seventy of these accommodated passages in the New Testament." *

I have said, these quotations in Matthew *might be mere allusions* of the kind to which I have referred; but I am by no means disposed to assert that they were nothing more.

It must always be borne in mind that this appeal to prophecy is especially directed to the Jew. Now, by the Jew, *whether a believer in Christ or not*, the Old Testament Scriptures were always regarded as *beaming*, if I may use such a phrase, with Messiah. The King that was to come was, in the eye of the Jew, to be found everywhere in the

* Horne, "Crit. Introd.," vol. ii. s. 1; ch. ix. s. 3.

Old Testament. He was *to them*,—and so far justly,—the centre around which everything else revolved. Again and again, probably, had all the texts quoted by Matthew been applied by the Rabbis to Messiah, for they regarded almost every event in their history as shadowing forth the coming Monarch. Nothing, therefore, could be more natural in addressing them than the course adopted by Matthew, viz., to quote the texts with which they were familiar, and to build the claims of Jesus on this sacred basis.

Viewed in this light, a strange beauty falls upon apparently obscure passages,—a kind of beauty which, if discovered in heathen writers, would fill scholars with rapture. Take, for instance, the passage, "Out of Egypt have I called my son," and read it in connection with Exodus iv. 22, 23,—"Israel is my son, my first-born:" "Let my son go" out of Egypt and its bondage, and how natural and beautiful the allusion becomes, when the lot of the terrestrial Israel is regarded as a type of Christ, the personification of the true or spiritual Israel.

So, again, in the 23rd verse, where no particular Prophet is named, but "the Prophets;"—their concurring testimony is referred to,—"He shall be called a Nazarene." Here the reference is to the meaning of the word "Nazarene," one low and despised; and the object is to connect this fact with such prophecies as those in the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, where Messiah is spoken of as "a root out of a dry ground," "without beauty," "despised," "rejected," not esteemed. In this way, writing for the Jew, Matthew seeks continually to show the connection which exists between various circumstances in the early life of Jesus, and the testimonies of the Old Testament, in which he professed to believe. He wished to prove to them that the

history of Jesus, even in his childhood, is a Divine history, and that Divine impulses directed all the steps of those who were connected with it.

Let me, however, once for all, assure you, that I am far enough from imagining that I can remove all the difficulties, or answer satisfactorily all the objections, that may and do present themselves to minds the most sincere and honest, when perusing this Gospel.

My aim is a very simple one. I merely want to show, that difficulties which have appeared to you fatal to the character of the Book in which they are found, are not really so; that you greatly magnify both their number and their importance; that most of them are neither new nor strange to intelligent believers; that they have long since been both felt and weighed; that many of them are unreal; that many others are capable of being easily and satisfactorily removed; and that *all* admit of alleviation, to an extent scarcely credible by those who have not made the experiment. T.

STANDING NOTE.—Whatever may be the *apparent* character or tendency of any Articles found in "THE INTERPRETER," we wish it to be distinctly understood that *they are not intended* to encourage secession either from the Communion of the Church of England, or from any body of Protestant Dissenters. Secession leads by inevitable consequences to sectarianism; and sectarianism we abhor. Our sole aim is to promote such an amount of freedom of thought and liberty of action in church matters, *within* existing bodies, as may best tend to further that true Christian Unity which is *counteractive* of all Schism "in the Body."

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints—as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine*.

THE RESURRECTION.

THE great question left open for consideration in our last paper, as capable of being decided only by the testimony of *Scripture*, was this:—

Did the Apostles regard the present dispensation as necessarily *shutting up every human being*, now or heretofore living on the earth, either to eternal blessedness on the one hand, or to eternal misery on the other? Admitting, as every Christian must do, that there is no salvation out of Christ, is it equally true

[Registered for transmission abroad.]

that there is no salvation *out of the Church;* using that term not in the Romanist sense, but as including the elect of all ages?

Whatever may be the decision ultimately arrived at, in reference to this important inquiry, let it be distinctly understood that its solution can in no way affect ourselves, regarded as persons who either thankfully accept or scornfully reject *the present offer* of the Gospel. The happiness of the righteous, whatever may be the final lot of the heathen, is eternally secure in Christ; it is a possession into which, in one sense, they have already entered; a possession in its fulness yet to be enjoyed, the pledge and earnest of which is the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. The misery of the lost, as self-destroyers, the deliberate scorners of God's grace, and the conscious rejectors of His love, can neither be removed nor alleviated by anything that may be revealed regarding a future probation for those who have never heard of Christ on earth, or having heard, have never, so to speak, been brought into any contact with the Gospel, which can truthfully imply either its acceptance or rejection.

Why, then, it may be said, investigate such a subject at all, since "secret things belong unto the Lord our God"? We reply, *Because* "those things which are *revealed* belong unto us and to our children." The question is not what may lawfully be *imagined* relative to the final condition of the masses of mankind, but what is actually *revealed?*—a question which, having a direct bearing on the hopes and expec-

tations we entertain relative to the coming glory and final triumph of the Redeemer, can scarcely fail to affect, more or less, both the formation of Christian character and the fulfilment of Christian duty.

In searching for a complete Scripture testimony on this important point, we propose to avoid, for the present, any reference to those passages in *the Old Testament Prophets* which refer to the future of the Jews, since the meaning of these is so much disputed among *the good.* We further intend to reserve for separate consideration all, or nearly all, those portions of the New Testament which speak of "the kingdom," whether regarded as the chief topic of the Gospels, the main subject of our Lord's conversations with the Apostles after His resurrection, or the burden of the ministry of St. Paul. We are desirous of confining ourselves, as much as possible, to texts which admit of being examined apart from the adoption of any particular scheme of unfulfilled prophecy.

Before entering minutely on the examination of particular passages, it may, however, be as well to notice *generally* a class of Scriptures claimed by Universalists, but which properly belong to another and a very different view. We mean such as these:— "The Father sent the Son to be *the Saviour of the world*" (1 John iv. 14); "That *the world* through Him might be saved" (John iii. 17); "I came not to judge the world, but *to save the world*" (John xii. 47); "God was in Christ, *reconciling the world* unto

Himself" (2 Cor. v. 19); "He is the propitiation for our sins, *and not for ours* (the elect) *only*, but also for the sins of *the whole world*" (1 John ii. 2); The Lord is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. iii. 9); "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He, by the grace of God, *should taste death for every man*" (Heb. ii. 9); "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. xv. 22); and many others which will suggest themselves to the reader.

Now, without for a moment admitting the extravagance, that these passages point to the salvation of *all, do what they will, and live as they may*,—for such a conclusion is as inconsistent with the freedom of moral agency as it is with the direct teachings of Scripture,—it seems but just to allow that they can never be explained satisfactorily, to any mind not under the dominant influence of traditional theology, by the assertion that they merely mean *universal salvability; i. e.*, that *it would have been possible* for all men to be saved by Christ, if they had ever heard of Him; or if, having heard, they become by a distinct and divinely wrought new creation united spiritually to Him as the Redeemer. This is sheer Rationalism; it is simply explaining words away, because we cannot make them harmonize with our pre-conceived systems of divinity. It is surely far wiser to take them in their plain and natural meaning, and conclude

that, in some way or other, however difficult it may be to make the admission accord with our systems, Christ will *really* be the Saviour of the race as well as the Redeemer of the Church. If the word "salvation" is never to be understood in any inferior sense to that in which it is used when applied to persons in bridal union with Christ, it seems exceedingly difficult to attach any *definite* meaning whatever to the statements now under consideration.

We can see no force whatever in the argument, that if such phrases as "the world," "the whole world," "all men," are not to be understood *literally*, as including *every human being*, whatever may have been the character of his voluntary actions, they must mean only *the offer* of salvation to mankind. Common sense in such a case is to be trusted rather than logic; and this faculty, "*the genius*" of those for whom the Bible was emphatically written,—its diction being always colloquial and popular,—plainly teaches that there is no inconsistency whatever in asserting that Christ is *really* the Saviour of the world, and yet allowing that a moral agent *may*, if he will, refuse the salvation. God literally and truly *sustains* all men during the term of their natural lives, for "in Him we live, and move, and have our being." But it would be a strange conclusion to arrive at, that because this is the case, a man *cannot* commit suicide; or to maintain that such a possibility obliges us to believe that God only expresses His *willingness* to sustain life, if we obey all the laws of our physical existence.

Happily the reverse is the fact, for men live on, in spite of perpetual disobedience to physical laws—in spite of folly and excess of all kinds.

We now approach texts which seem to demand a closer examination. We take them in the order in which they stand.

(i.) Matt. xii. 31, 32—"*It shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.*"

This text is properly regarded as in itself *conclusive* against Universalism. Be it so; but is it not, then, equally conclusive in favour of the supposition that *some sins*, not forgiven in this world, will be forgiven in the world to come? Mr. Alford says, "No *sure* inference can be drawn from these words with regard to forgiveness of sins in a future state." We admit this; for all inferences, *deduced from* Scripture, however necessary they may seem to us, introduce a *human* element, and should therefore never be placed side by side with a *Divine* statement. "Olshausen," adds Mr. Alford, "understands the passage (as many others have done) to imply forgiveness on repentance *in the imperfect state of the dead* before the judgment. This is a most extraordinary notion, and, to say the least of it, rather unintelligible."

(ii.) Matt. xix. 28—30, compared with Luke xxii. 28—30—"*Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*"

This text is commonly expounded as referring to "a renewing work of grace." The Apostles, it is said, "entered, *while on earth*, upon the royalty referred to in their own persons, and continue it in their writings." If this be not Rationalistic interpretation, it is hard to say what is. The word παλιγγενεσία (regeneration) is construed, at the public schools and the Universities, "in the resurrection"

(so Dr. Giles), and there is no doubt but that is its true meaning. Why not, then, take it as it stands, and regard it as teaching that at the resurrection the Apostles will literally be rulers, under Christ, of their nation?

(iii.) Matt. xxv. 31—46—"*These shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.*"

On this portion of Scripture,—the judgment of the nations,—Alford remarks justly, that the blessed of the Father here, for whom it is said the kingdom is prepared, are not the elect. "Scripture assures us," he says, "of two resurrections; the *first* of the dead in Christ, to meet Him and reign with Him, and hold (1 Cor. vi. 2) judgment over the world; the *second*, of all the dead, to be judged according to their works." He agrees with Olshausen and Stier, that "the blessed cannot here be the covenanted servants of Christ. The answer made, '*When saw we thee*,' &c., it would be impossible for *them* to make, who had done all distinctly with reference to Christ and for His sake. Such a supposition would remove all reality, as indeed it has generally done, from our Lord's description."

This is not the proper place to discuss the passage as a whole. It is sufficient for our present purpose to claim, on the strength of this interpretation, the learned and pious Dean of Canterbury, as one of those who recognize the existence in the future world of two classes, *beyond and beside* the elect.

We say nothing respecting the much-disputed word *αιωνιον*, because we think a great deal of time and learning have been wasted on its discussion. Every one admits that it is used in Scripture in *two* senses; sometimes to indicate limitation (*αιων* is constantly used to express this *age* or world—see Matt. xii. 32; xiii. 22), and sometimes, in other and numerous instances, to express a state or period beyond that of time. Is it not, then, safe and reasonable to understand the word, not in the vulgar sense of mere endless duration—for this can make nothing "eternal" which has had a beginning,—but as referring

to the grief or rapture of *the world to come*, in opposition to that which now is; the one being temporary, measured by time, the other eternal, having no such limitation? Bengel puts it thus:—"That which touches upon, and goes beyond, the limits of earthly time." To say, as some do, that *αἰώνιον* must be translated "everlasting," since to suppose the *possible* termination of any future punishment would be also to suppose the possible termination of the happiness of the righteous (the same word being used to express both), is such a low and selfish idea, that it is undeserving of notice. He who is *already* "in Christ," needs no words to assure him of everlasting union with the Redeemer.

The *parable* of Dives and Lazarus (Luke xvi. 19—31), for such it is (see Alford), applies only to Hades, or the world of separate spirits. Its exclusive reference is to that state *prior to the resurrection*, which is revealed to us as the abode of those who are waiting for the coming of the Lord, or fearfully looking forward to future judgment. "The Jews, like the Greeks, supposed the place of departed souls to be divided into two parts, contiguous to each other, but separated by an impassable chasm, yet so narrow, that they could see and converse with one another."—*Bloomfield.* Our Lord uses this popular belief as a parabolic medium, through which He teaches the great duty of love and kindness to poor brethren, and the certainty of future retribution. No argument can be founded on it beyond this, which is its plain and obvious lesson. Both Dives and Lazarus were Jews; all the obligations, therefore, of the Mosaic law towards *a poor brother* rested on Dives. Professedly they belonged to the same "household of faith." Dives corresponds to those who, in the twenty-fifth chapter, are represented as saying, "When saw we thee an hungered?" for on earth he never seems to have recognized Lazarus as a brother Israelite.

(iv.) Luke ii. 10, 11—"*Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you (the shepherds) is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*"

Few will maintain that "all people" here means only "the elect." The phrase is a Scriptural one: *e. g.*, "O be joyful in the Lord, *all ye lands*, serve the Lord with gladness, and come before His presence with a song. Be ye

sure that the Lord He is God, it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves. *We are His people*, and the sheep of His pasture" (Psa. c. 1, 2). *Who* are represented here as His people? Surely not the Israelites alone, but all men dwelling in all lands. But can it be said, in this sense, that the advent of Christ has ever yet been "good tidings of great joy to all people"? Alas! myriads have never heard even of His name; and of those who have, how few have spiritually received Him! True, He was "set for *the fall* as well as for the rising again of many;" but let it be observed, *it is the same persons who fall and rise again*, not the many that fall and the few that rise. Paul explains the text, when he says, in relation to the Jews, "Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy" (Rom. xi. 11). If, as we commonly suppose, *the great mass of mankind* are eternally lost, it is impossible to see *how* the news of the advent *could* have been "good tidings of great joy to all people." If the offers of the Gospel extend beyond this dispensation, all may yet be made plain.

(v.) Luke xiv. 14—"*Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just*,"—for feeding "the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind."

Two things are here distinctly recognized—"the *first* resurrection" (so Alford), and future reward for kindness shown here to the needy. The promise, be it observed, is made, not to the disciples, but to one of the Pharisees that bade Him to a feast (xiv. 1). May it not, then, fairly be asked whether such a passage does not seem *naturally* to refer to a dispensation of rewards and punishments yet to come, differing, *both in kind and in degree*, from the blessedness which awaits the elect?

(vi.) Luke xx. 35—"*The children of the resurrection.*"

The one truth here distinctly taught us in relation to the world that is to come, is simply this:—It will not, like the present one, be a world of *reproduction*. The spirit of the objection was, 'How can the body be raised, since from it earthly relations are inseparable?' The spirit of the answer is, 'The body *will* be raised; but those relations which have exclusive reference to a world like the present, which is always passing away, and therefore always in process of renewal, will cease.' The resurrection here spoken of is evidently the *first* resurrection, for it is the resurrection of those who shall "die" no more, and who are "accounted worthy to obtain that world;" all implying the resurrection of others who shall not be worthy, and who shall, at least, be *liable* to the "second death."

(vii.) John i. 9—"*The true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*"

That the "light" here spoken of is Christ himself, the Divine Light, will not be disputed; yet it is hard to see how Christ can, in this dispensation, truthfully be said to lighten "every man that cometh into the world." The doctrine of "the Friends," that an "inward light" is vouchsafed to every man (unless by this phrase is meant natural conscience, which man had before Christ came), is a mere supposition, incapable of proof, and contradicted by all human observation. It is easy to say, that "a moral sense of right and wrong, *accompanied with a portion of quickening and redeeming power*, is implanted universally;" but no missionary has ever been able to detect traces of it. We seem driven to the conclusion, that in this respect, as in so many others, "what we see not now, we shall see hereafter," and on the new earth perceive the intense reality and truthfulness of every word inspired of God.

(viii.) John xii. 32—"*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*"

"This he said," we are told in the next verse, "signifying what death he should die." But it is not the crucifixion *merely* which is meant: it is "*the death with all its consequences;* for the Saviour crucified is, in fact, the Saviour glorified."—(*Alford.*) But how has the drawing been verified? It is said, "By the diffusion of the Spirit *in the Church.* So Rev. xxii. 17." But this proclaiming of the invitation is surely not identical with drawing (ελκυσω). The same word is used by the same Apostle (see chap. vi. 44), when he tells us that Christ said, "No man can come to me, unless the Father which hath sent me draw (ελκυση) him." On what principle do we make it to mean, in the one place, effectual grace, and in the other only an offer? The true reconcilement is *to believe* Scripture when it teaches that, in some way or other, however difficult it may be for us to explain it, Christ *will* be the Saviour of the race.

(ix.) Acts iii. 21 — "*The times of restitution of all things.*"

We are quite aware that αποκαταστασεως (restitution) is by some translated "fulfilment;" but this, says Mr. Alford, is against all precedent. "Certainly, *to restore* is the usual import of the kindred verb αποκαθιστημι. I understand it," he says, "of the glorious restoration of all things, the παλιγγενεσια, which, as Peter here says, is the theme of all the Prophets from the beginning." But if this be the case, there must surely be some dispensation to come, in which the restoration will take place; for if at the second advent of Christ the elect go to meet Him, and the rest of mankind, as wicked, are consigned to Satan and his angels, it is impossible to perceive how such such a conclusion can, with any propriety whatever, be termed "the *restitution* of all things." A.

(*To be continued.*)

THE MINISTER.

COUNT AGÉNOR DE GASPARIN AND DR. MERLE D'AUBIGNÉ.

Chapter VI.—The Apology.

THE supposed justification of "the Fathers," would doubtless be found in the peculiar character and circumstances of the nations among whom the Christian faith was now making way.

'How different,' they would say to themselves and to each other, 'is the condition of these semi-pagans, by whom we are surrounded, to that of the first disciples at Jerusalem. *They* were instructed; *these* are ignorant. *The one thing requisite* to make the converts at Pentecost trustful and happy Christians, was the purification of their hearts from old prejudices,—from Jewish pride and exclusiveness,—from carnal notions about their exaltation as a people above all other nations. Their intellects were already exercised on the Old Testament Scriptures; they were an instructed people,—perhaps, on the whole, better educated than any other nation upon earth. A new *heart* was all they needed, and this vouchsafed, everything was accomplished. They were then prepared to advance in the Divine life with very little human help indeed, for they were not unaccustomed to any of the means by which that life was to be quickened and sustained.

'Far otherwise is it with these poor heathen! What *they*

need is mental illumination, a moral training, and constant guidance. But how simple, how dogmatic, how authoritative must be the instruction imparted, if it is to be at all adapted to their condition. Without books,—without the ability to read if they had them,—dependent therefore altogether on human teaching, and with intellects oftentimes so dull and unimpressible that they can be reached only through symbol and picture, what can be so suitable *to them* as agencies of the same character, although not precisely of the same form, as those by and through which God himself trained Israel, and brought them out of Egyptian darkness into the position and privileges of His chosen people?

'The gift of the Comforter, like the gift of tongues, was, to some extent at least, Pentecostal and temporary; the gift of the Holy Spirit, as bestowed upon patriarchs and prophets, as embodied in the Church, and as manifested in the teachings of authorized ministers, is surely *the only permanent form* in which, from the very necessities of the case, it can be communicated to all nations.

'How absurd, then, to suppose that these wretched idolaters can ever be made judges of truth; at the priest's lips they must seek knowledge. How vain to imagine that *in them* the Divine life can ever be sustained apart from that great spiritual organization which now occupies the place, and has inherited the authority, of the Apostles. Let them "hear the Church;" let them "obey those who have the rule" over them; let them learn that all spiritual influence flows from Christ to His Church, and *through the teachings of that Church alone*, is diffused over the whole world.'

So, in all probability, they reasoned, and, as it is not

difficult to see, with much plausibility; reasoned, too, very much as men do now, and with similar results.

Now supposing, as doubtless was the case, that here and there solitary voices were raised in favour of simpler and more Apostolic proceedings, how easy would be the reply! 'Circumstances,' it would be said, 'have so entirely changed, that church organizations must, of necessity, change too. The Apostles, and their *immediate* successors, were, at the best, but scattered missionaries, proclaiming as heralds, or teaching as disputants, the new faith which was then first publishing to the world. *We* have entered upon their labours, and, in doing so, by the blessing of God, have found ourselves in a totally different position to that which they occupied. *Our* converts are counted, not by hundreds, but by hundreds of thousands; they stretch over all the lands bordering on the Mediterranean; they consist, not like the earlier Apostolic congregations, of men previously prepared by Judaism, and by the instructions of the synagogue, for simple ecclesiastical institutions, and for further growth in the Divine life; they are, as we have already said, for the most part ignorant heathens; men needing to be taught the very first rudiments both of religion and morality; many of them are slaves; and almost all of them are in worse than literal bondage to pagan superstition, ignorance, and vice.

'What *can* we do, as these people multiply on our hands, as city after city becomes filled with such professors of the faith, but place them under the care of the ablest and most energetic Presbyter we can find willing to accept the dangerous charge? *What*, if they do render too much honour to such men! Is it surprising that under their circumstances, and in the absence of all adequate means for

teaching them better, he should often become, even in spite of his own protestations, a sacred person to them? He is their only earthly friend; and, more than this, he is the link, the only link, that connects them with the invisible world, with God, with truth, with heaven. What wonder if, by virtue of his office, he assumes, in their eyes, a character more than half Divine? How *can* he instruct such multitudes but by picture and symbol? and how is it possible for him to avoid those natural exaggerations which, in the case of rude and uncultivated persons, are needful to counterbalance dulness, and to excite minds long unaccustomed to any mental process?'

That this would be the kind of defence offered by the ancient church, could its leaders rise from the dead, and answer at the bar of public opinion, there can be little doubt; and, regarded apart from subsequent events which they could not foresee, it is hard to say how they could be condemned.

Another question, however, not so easily answered, forces itself upon attention. It is this. Why was this state of things perpetuated? Why was no provision made for a return, as quickly as might be, to more primitive practices? Why were not the more intelligent and advanced among the Christian community led on to higher attainments, and encouraged to grow out of the pupillage under which they had at first been necessarily placed? Why were not such made teachers of others? Why was everything relating to the Church vested in a clerical class, and confined to the sole guidance of ecclesiastics?

Alas! there can be but one reply. It was impossible to go back. Once thoroughly embarked in a wrong course, nothing is more difficult than retrogression. The clergy

would naturally be unwilling to give up the power they had so painfully and laboriously acquired. The people *wished* them to retain it. Why then should laymen be urged to take upon themselves the serious responsibilities which were involved in the search after truth, when others, far better qualified for the work, could do it for them?

True, change had, in the first instance, been introduced only as a matter of dire necessity; but was it not now becoming evident that these very necessities had, under the guidance of Providence, drifted the Church into the exact position it was intended she should ultimately occupy? The Apostles had indeed planted; but others had watered; and now the Church was becoming a full-grown and completely developed tree, under the shadow of which the nations were already beginning to repose. Had they not the promise to rely upon, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world"? Was it not a fact that the Christianity of the age, whatever might be its defects, was, *in their hands*, gradually subduing the earth? Who was to take the responsibility of even seeming to check for a moment so glorious a work,—one on which the Divine blessing was so evidently resting? Thus in all probability they reasoned.

But one difficulty still remained. Was not *direct* intercourse between Christ and the believer in danger of being intercepted? Was not the Church in fact taking His place? If all spiritual benefits were to be received only through the Church, was there no danger that this institution would soon come to be regarded as the real saviour of them that believe?

It might be so, but for one circumstance. The Church had in its hand a medium through which Christ himself was brought into immediate and actual contact with each

individual man. The Sacrament of the Holy Supper was that medium. Christ had indeed said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. The water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." And "this spake He of *the Spirit*, which they that believe in Him should receive." But had He not also said to these same Jews, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you"? And, again, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me, and I in him"?

True, when these words were spoken, no such ordinance as that of the Lord's Supper had been instituted. But who could doubt that they were predictive of it? And who, listening to St. Paul, when he says, "The cup of blessing which WE bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? the bread which WE break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" could fail to arrive at the conclusion, that the bread and the wine, *when thus blessed* or consecrated by the appointed minister, became to the believing recipient the channel by which Christ imparted Himself to redeemed humanity?

The conclusion was obvious. THE INCARNATION, not the gift of the Comforter, was *the central idea* of Christianity; and the broken bread the sacred symbol, not so much of sorrowing love, as of spiritual life and safety.

In this belief they were content to rest; and when, a generation or two afterwards, paganism fell prostrate throughout the Roman empire, who could venture to dispute the claims of the triumphant Church, or dare to doubt its oneness with its Divine founder?

And now circumstances again changed. What could the clergy do but thankfully accept the new position that God

had given them; and divide the land; and occupy the temples of idolatry; and turn its evil endowments to holier and nobler purposes; and control thought; and purify morals; and govern the world in accordance with the laws of Christ?

Would they not say, in the joy of their hearts, "Behold in all this the fulfilment of prophecy"? Christ told us that He would found a kingdom. Is it not rapidly developing amongst us? The "city of God," the "new Jerusalem,"—is it not, even now, rising before our eyes?

So *they* thought; but God had determined otherwise, for corruption had reached its height, and the Goths were at hand. "The rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it." But still the Church, like the ark of Noah, floated on the waters; and when the flood subsided, *there it stood*, the only refuge for the weary, the only protector for the poor and the oppressed, the only power capable of controlling the ruffianism by which it was surrounded, the only conservative element amid wreck and anarchy.

In the next chapter, which will be entitled POPERY, we propose to trace the continued influence of the principles and practices for which we have sought a supposed justification, as they come before us in connection with the subjection of the Gothic Hordes, the formation of Modern European Society, and the triumphs of Papal Despotism.

E.

READINGS WITH A SCEPTIC.

§ 5, MATTHEW, Chap. iii. 1—12.

The Call to Repentance.

"In those days came John the Baptist preaching," &c., &c.

SCEPTIC.—I am by no means disposed to quarrel with one course which I perceive you pursue in reading the New Testament,—that of *idealizing* as much as possible the scenes presented. To *enjoy*, perhaps to understand, any ancient narrative, it is obviously necessary to realize the time, place, and circumstances referred to; to move, as it were, among the actors; to listen with the thoughts and feelings that occupied their minds; and to judge of what is said and done, not by the prepossessions of to-day, but by the lights and associations of the age in which the event occurred, or the words were uttered.

Viewed in this way, the sudden appearance of the Baptist, clothed in the garb* and affecting more than the austerity of an ancient prophet, is very striking. It seems, too, to be a natural development of things. But I do not quite see what his hearers could understand either by "the kingdom of heaven" or by the baptism "of fire." But first tell me whether you regard John as a Jewish or a Christian prophet?

Believer. I think John the Baptist is to be regarded simply

* Not the camels' skin with the hair on, but raiment woven of camels' hair. From Zechariah (xiii. 4), it seems that such a dress was known as the prophetic garb. The "locust" was used as food by the lower orders in Judea, Lev. xi. 22.

as a *Jewish* prophet. He comes before his countrymen in that character alone. As such he follows the example of his illustrious predecessors, and in a time of general corruption denounces iniquity, warns of coming judgment, and calls to reformation of manners as the accompaniment of true repentance,—here used in the Old Testament sense of *turning to God as His people.*

The mission John fulfils is eminently popular. No persecution is raised against him. On the contrary, crowds hasten to his ministry, and all classes—rich and poor, Sadducees and Pharisees, the court and the common people—unite in acknowledging John to be a prophet.

His baptism does not appear to have been regarded as novel. The Jews were not only accustomed to bathing the body with water as a symbol of purification; they always baptized proselytes, and spoke of them as "newly born" in the water. In this case they submitted to the rite he proposed without question, regarding it as an appropriate purifying emblem, and indicating by the act belief in a coming Messiah, and their acceptance of John as a messenger of God.

The *peculiarity* consists in the announcement that the kingdom of heaven is *at hand;* that he (John) was "the voice" (or, rather, *as* the voice—for the prophecy is accommodated) spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, heralding the approach of the Lord; that their call was to pioneer Messiah's way by their penitence and their purity,—this being the appropriate preparation for receiving Him; and finally, that when He came, it would be with searching and discriminating power, baptizing some "with the Holy Ghost and with fire," while others should be burnt up in the unquenchable flame of the Divine indignation.

You ask, "What could they understand by all this?" I think that question is easily answered. The nation at this time, as I have already said, cherished in its inmost heart the expectation that, before long, the reign or kingdom of heaven, prophesied of by Daniel (vii. 14), would commence; that the long-expected Ruler and Deliverer was now about to appear; and that the Lord, remembering in mercy His ancient people, would again, and speedily, exalt the nation, and make them kings and priests upon the earth. Hence they welcomed the message of John as glad tidings; and, far from quarrelling with his demand for repentance and purity, they hastened to indicate, by observing the outward rite, their sense of its necessity and appropriateness.

But now came an announcement which, though plain enough, there is too much reason to fear they were *unwilling* to understand, viz., that nominal penitence and mere ceremonial purity would not suffice,—there must be "fruits meet for repentance;" that the mere fact of their being Jews was not enough to save them from destruction,—"Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham for our father;" but that every tree—the Jewish vine* planted by God himself not excepted—which brought not forth "good fruit," should be "hewn down and cast into the fire."

This was strange doctrine to them, for they had *one-sided* views of the kingdom of heaven, regarding it merely as an *external* thing, referring to the Jewish people as a nation. John intimates that it has two aspects, one external, the other internal. They had yet to be taught, in the further and fuller development of the Gospel, that the former (the external) included not the Jew only, but also

* Psalm lxxx. 8—14.

the Gentile; and that the latter (the internal) must be set up in the heart of each individual.

By the baptism of "fire," to be administered by One whose shoes he declares himself "unworthy to bear,"* I think they would be at no loss to understand that *special acceptance* which was indicated in ancient times by fire from heaven falling on the sacrifice. Associated as it is with the "Holy Ghost," it is as if he had said, "He shall both renew your natures and purify your lives; He shall do this by imbuing you with the spirit of love, and the spirit of suffering,—the latter, the consummating baptism of the good, being that which at once tests and ennobles.

Eastern customs would render them perfectly familiar with such imagery as that of "the axe," "the fan," "the garner," and the burning up of the chaff.† The language was, in fact, that of the common people. The hindrance to

* As if he had said, "Whose *slave* I am not worthy to be;" for the carrying or loosing of the shoe was the token of a slave being his master's property (*Lightfoot, from Maimonides*). The expression is singularly strong. It indicates something more than *official superiority*, and points to a higher nature in Christ.

† "*With unquenchable fire*," *i. e.*, unlike ordinary fire, incapable of being extinguished by any means within human power. This passage has sometimes been quoted to prove the doctrine of eternal life in torment. But it cannot fairly be so used. That "chaff" here stands *for men*, is certain; and bad men are compared to chaff for their *worthlessness*. Nothing more can justly be deduced. The reference, without question, is to the coming destruction of the Jewish nation. *Even then* "the axe" was "laid at the root of the tree,"—it was marked out to be cut down. "The wrath to come" (v. 7), or "impending vengeance" (*Campbell*), must have the same interpretation. "It was the general expectation of the Jew that troublous times would accompany the appearance of the Messiah" (*Alford*), although they little supposed what the result of their infatuated conduct would be.

the reception of this teaching is to be found in their unwillingness to believe that any Divine blessing could be withheld from a Jew.

Sc. Allow me to ask whether you consider the prophecy in Isaiah entirely fulfilled in the advent of John the Baptist (v. 3). If so, how do you account for the apparent discrepancy between the circumstances supposed by Isaiah and those under which John came? Isaiah makes "the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness" to be one of "comfort;" it is uttered at a time when "the warfare" of Jerusalem is said to be "accomplished," her "iniquity pardoned," and when she has received "double," *i. e.*, I suppose, an ample or adequate punishment, "for all her sins." John's voice, on the contrary, was that of warning, rather than of consolation; Jerusalem had *not* then been punished,—the axe still lay at the root of the tree.

B. I am glad to see that you look so keenly into the text, and I fully admit the force of what you say. I frankly tell you, *I do not believe* that the prophecy in question was entirely fulfilled in John the Baptist; a man who, as we read elsewhere, was at once "Elias," and yet "not that prophet." We are told that John came "in the spirit and power of Elias," but *another coming* is, I believe, yet in the future,—a coming as real and personal as that of Christ himself. *Then*, I doubt not, all the circumstances will be found exactly to tally with the prophecy. Matthew now *accommodates* it to John. But we shall have to deal with these prophetic quotations again before long.

Before passing on, however, let me ask you to notice—for I think it strong internal evidence of honesty and integrity—that, at this early period of the narrative, the writer, by the mouth of John, thoroughly recognizes and

prominently brings forward two great principles; the first, *fatal to all untruthfulness* of whatever kind, is the utter worthlessness of the outward, when it does not truly represent the inward: the second, fatal to mere ritualism and superstitious formality, is that men may have the noblest of all spiritual ancestry; may belong to the purest and best of churches; may form part of a community chosen by God himself; and yet, if they are personally and practically insincere and worthless, it will avail them nothing.

It is difficult *even to imagine* an impostor inventing, or a deluded fanatic promulgating principles like these. T.

STANDING NOTE.—Whatever may be the *apparent* character or tendency of any Articles found in "THE INTERPRETER," we wish it to be distinctly understood that *they are not intended* to encourage secession either from the Communion of the Church of England, or from any body of Protestant Dissenters. Secession leads by inevitable consequences to sectarianism; and sectarianism we abhor. Our sole aim is to promote such an amount of freedom of thought and liberty of action in church matters, *within* existing bodies, as may best tend to further that true Christian Unity which is *counteractive* of all Schism "in the Body."

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at,—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints, as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine.*

THE RESURRECTION.

(SECOND PAPER.)

WE resume our inquiry into the testimony of Scripture relative to the nature and character of the world, or age, that is to come. The following passages seem to demand notice:—

(x.) Rom. v. 15—19.—"*As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*"

It is admitted by all scholars that "many" here, ought to be rendered "the many;" the phrase, therefore, corre-

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sponds to the "all men" of the 18th verse. It certainly seems to teach that *now* no one is under the wrath of God *simply because he is a child of Adam*, for the death of "the second Adam" has, in this aspect, removed the consequences of the disobedience of the first. "The wrath of God" is, indeed, "revealed against all unrighteousness of men" who "*hold the truth* in unrighteousness" (Rom. i. 18); but it is not revealed against the new-born infant, or the idiot, or against any who have not "sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression," even though they be "by nature children of wrath even as others." *Death* indeed rests upon such; but only for a time; for "as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." A depraved nature they certainly inherit, and are therefore weak to resist evil; but for this, too, Christ has provided, by the gift of the Holy Spirit. The *result* of the whole is, spite of all present appearances to the contrary, that one day the song of the universe will be, "where sin abounded, grace did *much more* abound" (v. 20).

(xi.) Rom. viii. 19—25—"*The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.*"

The first thing to be noticed here is the distinction drawn by the Apostle between "the creature" and "the sons of God;" the former waits for the glory which shall be revealed in the latter. All creation, animate and inanimate, is thus, by a bold figure of speech, represented, as with outstretched neck, longing for and anticipating this great event. To confine the benefit of such a manifestation, as some do, to the animal creation (so Adam Clarke and others), is strange indeed; for who can believe that the revelation of the glory of the church will bless the lion and the cameleopard, but leave the negro in despair? The force of the passage, however, stands out in clear and full relief on the supposition that, at the time referred to, the earth

shall be reinhabited by risen men, happily perfecting a probation which had been limited or cut short in this age; some, no doubt, bearing the consequences of neglect and folly while here; others enjoying a "happiness which is widening and enlarging for ever, though distinct from the peculiar glory" of the sons of God.

(xii.) Rom. xi. 26—"*And so all Israel shall be saved.*"

Is it possible to imagine that this direct assertion, standing in the connection in which it does, *can* mean "a remnant" which may be living during the millennium? What comfort would it have been to Paul to know that certain Jews (whether many or few), living 2,000 years after the time he wrote, would be saved, if all the generations between would infallibly be lost? How then could it be said that "God hath concluded them all in unbelief, *that he might have mercy upon all*"? (32.) "A remnant according to the election of grace" (5) there was then; but Paul speaks of a *national* recovery, and that, not in the sense of a corporate one,—for *spiritual* blessings are always individual, but with a meaning as wide as the ruin it is intended to repair.

(xiii.) 1 Cor. xv. 35—"*With what body do they come?*"

What is this but the question so often put now in forms like these,—How is it possible *so* to unite the present world and the next, as to regard the latter only as a continuation of the former,—for the body will have dissolved in the grave, and with it will have disappeared all the countless influences it exercised over the spirit? How is it possible so to bridge the great gulph which separates time and eternity, that this life, so to speak, can be *carried on* in the next? Discipline, and therefore probation, *must* terminate on earth, for the natural body and the spiritual body can have little or nothing in common. To all which Paul replies, "Thou fool, didst thou never *sow* wheat and reap

wheat? Is the wheat thou dost reap so different from the wheat thou didst sow? Is it not rather, in spite of primal decay, though *not* the same, yet *the very same* wheat? So will it be at the resurrection.

There is little reason to suppose that the Athenians would have "mocked" as they did, when Paul, standing on Mars Hill, preached to them "the resurrection," if he had only represented by that term a spiritual judgment of all mankind, to take place in some distant locality; *for the immortality and judgment of the soul was a common belief.* The "book of the dead," which we can now decipher from Egyptian records, does not seem to differ much from our popular views, when it describes the passage of the soul after judgment, by Osiris, to the realms of light;* nor is the heathen notion of "eternal punishment in Tartarus" very unlike that of many modern Christians.

It was the *earthly* part of the doctrine,—the resurrection of *the body*,—of *all* dead bodies, and the judgment of men *by a man*, ordained to that office, and already raised from the dead, that caused the scorn of the Athenians; and it was this same doctrine, viewed in another aspect, which excited the hatred of the Jew. It is very questionable whether *this portion of truth* is now so preached amongst us, as to produce similar effects either on the sceptic or the Israelite. Both admit the immortality of the soul; and neither are offended by anything we say or write regarding the resurrection.

(xiv.) Ephes. i. 10—"*The dispensation of the fulness of times.*"

Then—at the *appointed hour*—for this is the meaning of the fulness of time (see Gal. iv. 4), will He "gather together in one all things in Christ," whether in heaven or on earth; *i.e.*, visible or invisible. How this can be inter-

* Heath's "Future Kingdom of Christ," vol. i. p. 277.

preted of the present dispensation (so Gill and others) it is difficult to see. Mr. Alford translates, "the economy of the fulfilment of the seasons," and objects to its being explained by the passage in the Galatians. Still the difficulty remains, "*In what sense* will all things, visible and invisible, be *ever* gathered together in Christ?" It is clearly a gathering *distinct from*, although including, "the chosen before the foundation of the world" (4), since God makes known the mystery of His will to the elect, *in order that* in due time the gathering may be accomplished (9, 10); and it is exceedingly difficult to understand such a process apart from the expectation of a time when the *apparently lost* myriads of mankind shall again appear upon the scene, and find a Saviour whom they never knew upon earth.

(xv.) Ephes. iii. 21—"*Unto Him be glory in the church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages.*"

In this magnificent doxology, glory is ascribed to Christ *in the church;* that is, says Mr. Alford, "as its theatre before men in which that glory must be recognized and rendered," to "all the generations of the age of the ages." *If this be so*, the church, as the glorifier of Christ, and men capable of recognizing the glory (which lost spirits can never do), must exist somewhere, *as distinct from the church*, long after the limited period of this world's duration.

(xvi.) Phil. iii. 11—"*If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.*"

Is it possible to imagine that St. Paul only refers here to that resurrection which is common to all? Is it reasonable to separate this from what is said elsewhere about "the *first* resurrection" (1 Thess. iv. 16; Rev. xx. 5); that prior *judgment of saints* which is to take place before the rest of the dead are raised, and which is so closely associated with *their taking part* in the judgment of the world" (1 Cor. vi. 2, 3); the judgment which is *not* to decide whether they

(the saints) are Christ's or not, but to allot to them rewards or deprivations "according to their works"? The resurrection to which St. Paul aspired, was one which implied, *to him*, the reception of the unfading crown. It is very remarkable that in the Apocalypse (chap. xx.), after a *symbolic* vision of thrones of judgment (v. 4), there follows a distinct explanatory assertion,—"*this is the first resurrection*;" just as we are told, after the casting of death and hell into the lake of fire, "*this is the second death*."

(xvii.) 1 Tim. ii. 6—"*A ransom for all, to be testified* (or, *a testimony*) *in due time*."

Why a *future* testimony,—"in due time"? Was not Christ *then* preached as having died for all? Does not such a mode of expression seem to point to a time, *then not arrived*, when it should be seen that Christ was indeed a ransom for all, since God would "have all men to be saved" (4); and this as distinguished from a dispensation which must *to them* have appeared one chiefly, if not exclusively, for the salvation of the elect?

(xviii.) 1 Tim. iv. 10—"*We trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe*."

What can these words mean, if they do not imply a higher and a lower salvation? a salvation *for some*, of a special character, entered into by faith here; and a salvation for others, who, for want of a teacher, have not had the opportunity of knowing the Gospel, of an inferior kind? Divines have felt the difficulty, and therefore say that *Saviour* here does not mean Saviour. So they read it thus:—"God preserves all by the care of His providence, but saves believers from eternal death" (so Macknight, Baxter, and Gill). Alford, following Clarke, interprets, "Saviour *intended* for all, but *appropriated* only by believers." But the text does not say *intended* for all; it says "*who is*" (ὅστιν) *in some sense or other*, "the Saviour of all," but

specially, and in a higher sense, "of those that believe." Without pushing the word "all" to the absurd extent of practically denying that any man can destroy himself by his wickedness and impenitence—which, as we have said before, is contrary to the plain statements of Scripture, and destructive of that amount of freedom which is essential to moral agency—why can we not accept the teaching in its simple and obvious sense? Do this, and the passage finds further light thrown upon it by another text, which occurs in the Second Epistle to Timothy (ii. 20), where we are told that in the church, as in "a great house," there are some "vessels to honour, and some to dishonour." He who would be "a vessel unto honour" must "purge himself" from "profane and vain babblings," such as those indulged in who maintained that the resurrection, being merely a spiritual thing (16—18; Rom. vi. 4), was "past already," and live a holy and godly life. Then would he be "meet for the Master's use," fit for closer union with the Redeemer than others, and, therefore, for more distinguished service. Few Christians, probably, with this warning before them, would now speak of the resurrection as *merely spiritual;* but not a few so spiritualize it, as practically to deprive it of all motive power over the human heart.

(xix.) Heb. ii. 9, 10—"*Crowned with glory and honour; that He, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man.*"

Here it is distinctly asserted that Christ (as the result of Divine love) tasted death *for every man.* The question is—in what sense, and with what results? Mr. Alford understands the phrase to refer "to *the applicability* of Christ's death to each individual man"—Guyse, Owen, Gill, and others say, "every man" *means*, the Church—"all who savingly believe." Again we reply, But what does *the text* say? Certainly, the very reverse of these interpretations.

Which then are we to believe, God or man? Further—and we say it with deep reverence—where, to human eye at least, is the grace or goodness of God seen in allowing Christ to taste death for every man, if the great, the overwhelming majority of the race *never* hear of His death, and never profit by it?

(xx.) Heb. ii. 14—"*That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil.*"

Primarily, no doubt, through his own sacrificial death; but also in connection therewith, that "through death," through mortality, the immortal might be reached. The destruction referred to, according to all orthodox commentators, is not of *the person*, but of *the works* of the devil. The passage is usually regarded as parallel to Rom. xvi. 20. The point to be observed is, that the great agency for the destruction of satanic power is *death*. But, if ordinary views be correct, death, so far at least as the great proportion of the race are concerned, but consummates *the triumph of Satan*, for it passes an overwhelming majority of all that have ever lived into his kingdom for ever.

(xxi.) Heb. xii. 23—"*The general assembly and church of the first-born.*"

Here *the whole church* is styled the "church of the first-born." "The title of the first-born, however, loses all its proper force, if the results of redemption are limited to these alone. The whole emphasis of the phrase depends on the supposition that there are *younger brethren* of the same family, who do not share in the same privileges of birthright. Thus our Lord himself is said to be 'the first-born among many brethren.' He is *one* with His people, but eminent in privilege and honour above them all."—(*Birks.*) The analogy betwixt these first-born ones and the first-born of Israel is striking. They (the first-born) were *specially* dedicated to God (Exod. xiii. 11—15); but the other

children were not the less "of Israel"—they too were the Lord's.

(xxii.) James i. 18—"*Of his own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures.*"

By another Apostle (St. Paul, Rom. xi. 16) we are told, "If the first fruit be holy, *the lump* is also holy." What can either statement mean, if the redemption of others to God's service, *besides* those who are here new-born by the word of truth in the Gospel, be altogether excluded?

(xxiii.) 1 Pet. i. 5—12—"*Salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*"

A salvation, therefore, as yet not *fully* revealed; a salvation respecting which "the prophets enquired and searched diligently" (10); a salvation which "the angels desire to look into" (12); yet by faith, *so far made known* to these disciples, that it led them to "*hope to the end* for the grace" that would be brought to them "at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (13). Now, so far as the salvation referred to related to their own souls (9), it was already revealed, for they were men who, as "elect according to the foreknowledge of God" (2), had *already passed* from death unto life, were even then "*in Christ*," and, "rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory," waited only for the full fruition of their joy at the coming of the Redeemer (8). The "salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" must, therefore, be "the glory that should follow the sufferings of Christ" (11). *This*, for which the world has now waited for above 1,800 years, still remains to be revealed. That *a connection* of some kind subsists between this yet unrevealed salvation, and "the preaching of Christ unto the spirits in prison" (iii. 19, 20), is, to say the least of it, *probable*, from what follows (iv. 6), where, as Mr. Alford demonstrates, the νεκροις has the same sense as

νεκρους in ver. 5, *both* meaning "*dead men*, literally and simply so called; men who have died and are in their graves," and "*not* men dead in trespasses and sins." Now it is to these dead men (whoever they may be) that the Apostle says "the gospel was preached," "that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but *live according to God in the spirit*" (iv. 6); (see Mr. Alford's entire note on this passage). The learned Dean seems to agree with Olshausen, who, in commenting on Matthew xii. 31, 32, imagines forgiveness on repentance to be possible, "in *the imperfect state of the dead*," before the judgment. We think it far more reasonable to refer the whole to the resurrection.

(xxiv.) 1 Pet. iv. 18—"*If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?*"

We refer to this text only to observe,—in case it should suggest itself to any mind, as opposing the idea of mercy or grace after the resurrection,—that it refers, by the consent of all commentators, *not* to eternal salvation, but to a judgment of the living, in connection with fiery trial and persecution. Some suppose it to point to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem.

(xxv.) 2 Pet. iii. 13—"*We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*"

Why "new heavens," except as descriptive of the abode of those who, "one with Christ," find their "citizenship in heaven,"—the "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. xi. 10)? Why a "new earth," except it be as the abode of those who are the subjects of that kingdom over which the saints are to rule as "kings and priests to God and to Christ, for ever and ever"? And *who* are these "subjects" so likely to be, as those who have not heard of Christ on earth?

(xxvi.) 1 John iii. 8—"*The Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil.*"

This text good Bishop Beveridge simply interprets—"Christ was manifested to undo all that the devil had done, by recovering *mankind* out of that sinful state to which the devil had brought them." But may it not well be asked, Is this the case *now?* Has it ever been the case during the 1,800 years that have elapsed since the words were penned? Can it *ever* be the case, if almost all mankind since the fall of Adam are irrecoverably lost, and given over to Satan? Why cannot we believe the Apostle, when he says, "We see not yet all things put under Him" (Heb. ii. 8), and look for such a consummation at the resurrection? It is surely vain to deny that if, as *the fruits* of Satan's work, the myriads of the heathen and of the unconverted go on sinning against God to all eternity, Christ cannot truthfully be said to *destroy* the works of the devil.

(xxvii.) 2 John i. 8—"*That we receive a full reward.*"

Here the listening to Antichristian teachers is said to bring with it loss, great loss, comparative degradation,—the *forfeiture* of a "full reward." It is the contrast to St. Paul's "abundant entrance;" it marks the distinction between persons saved with what may, without impropriety, be called the higher and the lower salvation.

(xxviii.) Revelation, chap. xxi. Let it be noticed here that this *figurative* description of the new heaven and the new earth occurs, *not* before but after the millennium; after the vision of the "great white throne;" after the dead, small and great, have stood before God; after "the sea" has "given up her dead;" when all have been judged "according to their works;" and "death and hades" cast into "the lake of fire." It is after all this,—after the sentence of "the second death" has been passed on the wicked,—that we find *saved nations*, not *in* the New Jerusalem, yet

"walking in the light of it;" a "tree of life" being there, which yields *fruits* for those within the city, and *leaves* for the healing of those who are without. The Church, saved by faith, is now glorified with its Lord. The world, judged by works, has received its final award; *some*, finding a place in "the Book of Life," are seen inheriting "the kingdom prepared" for them "from the foundation of the world;" while others, excluded from that list, have been cast into "the lake of fire."

Here, for the present, we pause. We are not disposed to dogmatize, or to be *over positive* about the force of anything we have brought forward. We do not so much want to make converts as to stimulate inquiry. We wish, if it be possible, to convince devout but timid Christians that everything that *can* be known of Scripture is not necessarily already known. We think, with Bishop Butler, that "it is not at all incredible that a book which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many things as yet undiscovered."

We do not, however, set ourselves up as discoverers. We profess nothing more than a desire, faithfully and fearlessly, without regard to the opinions of any *class* in the Church of Christ, to search after truth in the fountain of all truth—Holy Scripture. Believing, as we do most firmly, that in so far as pride or prejudice, love of novelty, fear of blame or wish for praise, timidity or self-complacency, remain in us unsubdued, so far, and to that extent, we shall be liable to error, we say to our readers, with Augustine, "Correct not our writings out of your own opinion, or out of conten-

tion; but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so it is not ours; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and ours. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been ours; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither ours nor yours."

If the Scriptures point, as we think they clearly do, to mercy beyond the grave—to redemption beyond the Church—to a victory of Christ, so signal that the works of Satan shall be utterly destroyed, we may be quite sure that the recognition of such a truth cannot be otherwise than beneficial; if they teach no such doctrine, the sooner delusion is got rid of the better.

One objection to all that has been advanced we may be allowed to anticipate. It is this:—"If the view proposed be true, how comes it to pass that, for so many centuries, the wisest and best of Christians have failed to discern it, and held, all but invariably,* to the opinion, that *every human being*,—whether unconverted heathen or nominal Christian,—is stereotyped for ever in the condition in which he dies? that faith, or love, or hope, beyond the grave are impossible?

* We say "all but invariably," because the late Robert Hall, of Leicester, avowed his belief that Jews *might* be saved by Christ, who had rejected Christ here (see "Works," vol. iv. p. 461); and the late John Foster, the Essayist, in a very striking letter to Dr. Harris, on "The Great Commission," denies that *to all* this world is *a probation*. See also remarks by the late Dr. Harris ("Foster's Life and Correspondence," vol. ii. p. 446).

that if Christ be not known *now*, He never can be known? that to be out of the Church here (using that word in its widest sense) is, of necessity, to be out of Christ for ever? that, in short, *all the issues of eternity* depend on the proclamation of the Gospel now, even though that Gospel should, for want of a preacher, never be heard; or, being heard, should never have been intelligently comprehended, or been *consciously* hated or rejected?"

An honest and truthful reply may, we feel sure, be comprised in one sentence—*the continued existence of "the mystery of iniquity."* This is, without doubt, the grand reason of our darkness; the one comprehensive cause of our diversities of creed, heart-burnings, and divisions; a cause which, while it lasts, will continue to render Christian union, in its higher sense, impossible. For "the mystery" includes, not merely ritualism and superstition, the elements of heathenism and the elements of infidelity, but scholasticism and priestcraft, "philosophy, falsely so called," disguised under the specious names of "inferential theology," and "the analogy of faith." Until this ever-varying Antichrist is thoroughly broken up, *advance* is impossible."

When this *is* done,—and God will bring it about in His own time, for the days of darkness are numbered,—we shall begin to see how the primitive doctrine of "no salvation out of Christ," came to be changed into "no salvation out of the Church;" how the doctrine of the eternal ruin of all *not in the Church* followed as a

matter of course; how this ruin came to be expanded into the endurance by the lost of everlasting sensitive torment; how naturally the invention of purgatory rose out of this conclusion; how priestcraft built, and built, and built on this wide foundation, until, at length, religion itself became materialized; terror supplanted mercy; Christ's sacrifice overshadowed the Father's love; Mary overshadowed Christ; saints and martyrs overshadowed both; and priests, often as wicked as worthless, *traded* on them all.

The Reformation did not, and could not, completely emancipate mankind from this fearful bondage. Terror, to a great extent, still rules. And the greatest proof that it is so is to be found in the all-prevalent notion, that if anything should impair belief in the hopeless and eternal misery of all the unconverted, the wicked would be freed from the most powerful motive to repentance, and Christians be deprived of their strongest incentive to care for the spiritual condition of others.

In a future paper we shall endeavour to show that the effect would be precisely the reverse; that, on the contrary, all the higher motives of the Gospel would, by such a consummation, be intensified. Before we do this, however, we must devote a paper or two to St. Paul's view of what he calls THE KINGDOM.

A.

THE MINISTER.

COUNT AGÉNOR DE GASPARIN AND DR. MERLE D'AUBIGNÉ.

Chapter VII.—Popery.

THE philosophic historian of the middle ages, reviewing the condition of the West after the coming-in of the Goths, observes,—"Such is the complex reciprocation of good and evil in the dispensations of Providence, that we may assert, with only an apparent paradox, that had religion been more pure it would have been less permanent, and that Christianity has been preserved by means of its corruptions. The papal supremacy, monastic institutions, and the use of a Latin liturgy, are all justly disapproved; yet all these, under Divine guidance, conspired to preserve the Church from extinction in that long night which succeeded the irruptions of the northern nations. The supremacy of the Pope kept up that intercourse between the nations of Europe which, under existing circumstances, was essential to their mutual profession of the Christian faith; the monastery was the only place in which the treasures of Divine truth were stored; and the Latin language was the closed casket in which they were preserved. Had the Scriptures been translated out of Latin when that language ceased to be intelligible, its sacred truths would, humanly speaking, have been lost for ever, amid the barbarous dialects which then prevailed."

Yet who will venture, *on this ground*, to extenuate the

system from which these incidental benefits happily sprung. Admitting, as all must do, the force of Mr. Hallam's remarks, and regarding them, as they doubtless were intended to be regarded, as illustrative of the great truth, that God is continually bringing good out of evil, and overruling the perversity and wickedness of men for the accomplishment of His own great and gracious purposes, the question still returns, How was the world brought into this state? Why was it that the Roman empire, instead of being strengthened and invigorated by its conversion to Christianity, was but weakened and emasculated by the change? How came it to pass that, instead of presenting, in its new character, a firm and unbroken front to the barbarian invaders, it fell before them, almost as helplessly as the trees of the forest fall before the stroke of the woodman?

There can be but one answer. The religion that subdued the Roman empire, and obtained the supremacy over Paganism, *was not, properly speaking, Christianity.* It had little or nothing apostolic about it. It was a religion in which the chief truths that had been taught by Paul and Peter and John, if not absolutely denied, were so overlaid by superstitious ceremonies, and so darkened by materialism, that little or nothing was left on which the foundation of a manly character could be based. It was a Christianity at once superstitious and fanatical; the offspring, not of apostolic teaching, but of the cloister; not of intelligence, but of imbecility. What wonder that such a faith should only have enslaved its votaries, undermined patriotism, and sapped, instead of strengthening, all the virtues on which the security of a nation reposes?

We are not ignorant that political and natural causes,

manifold in character, *combined* to bring about that general degeneracy, which marked the decline of the Roman empire at the period of which we speak. But we cannot honestly refuse to admit that one chief element of ruin was to be found in the so-called Christianity of the day, opposed, as it certainly was, to all manly energy; and transferring, as it did, the influence formerly exercised by able statesmen and great soldiers to a crowd of ignorant priests and monks, utterly unfit to wield it with the slightest advantage to the community.

But even this evil, great as it unquestionably was, would have been of comparatively little moment, had the people who called themselves Christians illustrated by their virtues the religion they professed. The reverse was unhappily the case. Priestcraft had not only destroyed public spirit; it had inaugurated a period of all but universal profligacy,—a profligacy so deep and wide-spread that a process little short of extermination was required in order to remedy the wrong.

There is something frightful in the thought that A CHURCH SYSTEM should have *so* worked,—with such a deadly force,—that it had actually become necessary, for the preservation of the faith itself, that a flood of rude and undisciplined barbarians should overflow Europe, to supply the community with the elements of a new moral life, and to purge the Church of its grosser impurities. Yet so it was. The very hordes that overran the land knew it and felt it. Like the Saracen in the East, the Goth, as he pressed westward, strengthened himself under the conviction that he was sent of God to punish the enormities he beheld.

And what a punishment it was! Darkness and desolation, followed by calamities so great, that, by the tenth

century, the impression had become all but universal that the end of the world was at hand; a superstition so abject that, when an eclipse of the sun or moon happened to be visible, the cities were deserted, and their miserable inhabitants fled for refuge to caverns and rocks; a despair so hopeless, that temples, palaces, and noble edifices, both public and private, were suffered to decay, or literally pulled down, under the impression that the final dissolution of all things was at hand.

Yet the system survived. Strong in the veneration which still prevailed for "usages, ceremonies, sentiments and opinions which had sprung up, nobody knew how, in the earliest times, and which had obtained the approval in long succession of every leading and accomplished mind—of all the fathers, doctors, and rulers of the church, of confessors and of martyrs,"—the spiritual world, as represented by the hierarchy, remained unchanged. Clericalism only struck its roots deeper and deeper into the soil, developing and strengthening its power over the soul of man. Spiritual blessings, of whatever kind, still flowed only through *material* channels, and these were exclusively in the hands of the clergy. The priest, the bread, the wine, the water, all in their turn were made conduits of grace. Man was everywhere, the Holy Spirit nowhere. At length, every thought and feeling connected with religion gradually sank to the level of the age, and teachers and taught became alike coarse, rude, and brutal. Child worship and Madonna worship came to be regarded as the most appropriate methods of honouring the Redeemer; the crucifixion, instead of being viewed with grief and shame, as the most atrocious crime ever perpetrated on the earth, was contemplated with a sort of tragic satisfaction; meditations on

"the manger" and "the tree" superseded thoughts of the resurrection and ascension; and the kingly reign of Christ, stripped of all its glory, was exhibited to mankind as manifested in the overthrow of the old idolatry, in the subjection of the Gothic hordes, and in the majesty of mitred priests.

Popery was but a natural and necessary development of this form of Christianity. In some respects it was an improvement upon it, "inasmuch as it created and employed a force *counteractive* of the evils which that system had generated." The Popes, by creating "a power exterior to the system, and assuming to be independent of it by virtue of the special authority vested in the successors of Peter," became salutary *checks* to the abounding profligacy which marked the Roman empire when first it became Christian,—abominations not arising, as too many still suppose, from the alliance which in the fourth century was effected between the Church and the State, but from causes which had existed long before that alliance could have been contemplated as probable. It is more than questionable, indeed, whether the ascension of the Church to political power either ripened or expanded the evils which had found place in it while it was yet an illegal and a persecuted faith.*

* To Mr. Isaac Taylor, one of the most original and profound Christian writers of the age, the world is indebted for this, as for many other historical truths. The writings of Mr. Taylor are now numerous, for he has long been before the public; but none of his productions have as yet occupied the position they unquestionably deserve, and which, one day, they will as unquestionably obtain. The great characteristic of Mr. Taylor is *deep moral earnestness*, an earnestness far too deep and sincere to admit of the slightest tampering with truth in order to serve the purposes of any party. As a consequence, he has never been popular. At present he is generally regarded as a suggestive but somewhat unsatisfactory writer, inasmuch as he is always more anxious

The world was now in the hands of the Church. Kings and emperors might in turn succeed each other, and with more or less vigour sway their temporal sceptres, but the only *real* authority was the spiritual; an authority, as has been well said, "often veiling its high pretensions under the language of adulation and servility, as it did its persecutions in prayers of charity and piety, but at the same time 'binding kings in chains, and nobles in links of iron,' —in chains indeed of unearthly temper, and links of iron that no hand was seen to forge, but against which sinews of flesh could not avail." * The people, during all this time depraved and degraded, scorned moral restraint, and too frequently exhibited features of the darkest and most repulsive character.

It was amidst this chaos of paganized Christianity and abounding profligacy—amid darkness and all moral disorder —amid prevailing tyranny, avarice, and pride—amid the grossest superstition and the densest popular ignorance, that the *logical theology*, not of Papists only, but of Puritans, —of Owen, and Howe, and Baxter, and President Edwards, was finally consolidated and impressed upon the world by one who, whatever were his excellencies, "warmly defended each principal article of the superstition of his times, and has been *and may fairly be* cited by Romanists in support of almost every element of the papal system."†

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to furnish his readers with materials for forming an independent judgment than to enforce definite conclusions. The time is not perhaps very far distant when his writings will exercise an influence over religious thought far wider than he himself in his most sanguine moments has probably ever imagined to be possible.

* "Bampton Lectures," by the Bishop of Hereford.

† Augustine. See "Ancient Christianity," vol. i. p. 331.

Into the history and actual value of this theology—consisting as it does of a vast collection of human inferences, apparently enforced by texts of Scripture, but really overriding Scripture itself by the conclusions of human logic, and, while professing to be the freest thing in the world, invariably crushing every movement towards freedom of thought *among the good*,—it is impossible here to enter, beyond observing that its endurance to this day *alone* proves how admirably it has been adapted to the human mind; how skilfully it has combined a field for the reason with rest in authority; and how thoroughly it has been able to solve one of the most difficult of problems,—that of harmonizing a bold and apparently free exercise of the human faculties with absolute subordination to ecclesiastical influence, whether exercised by pope, councils, general assemblies, synods, or sects.

What we *specially* need to learn in relation to *all* theological systems, is, that from their very nature they will always be made the basis and the bulwark of clericalism; that as long as they endure priest-rule can never be overthrown; that when they fall, and not till then, will "the mystery of iniquity"—including under that title both superstition and infidelity,—come to an end; for let it only be admitted that human inferences are of equal authority with Divine statements—it matters not how pious may be the intention—reason is exalted over revelation, and a door opened at which scepticism will be sure to enter side by side with superstition and sectarianism.

No mistake can be greater than to suppose that because Romanists discourage the reading of the Bible, and persecute those who insist upon the right of perusal, that, therefore, Rome *abandons* the sacred oracles as an authority.

She never did so. Of all the disputes which she has professed to decide, probably it would be impossible to find one in which the authority of Scripture was not claimed by both parties as their stronghold. The Fathers, in the midst of the grossest superstitions and the most monstrous sacerdotal claims, continually recommend the study of the Scriptures to all classes; and the great Church leaders invariably appeal to that tribunal as their own. But what does all this avail if the Divine statement may be authoritatively expounded by the human teacher, and the truth of God supplemented by the everlasting "*therefores*" which so often are seen to wind, like "wreaths of smoke, from the narrow aperture of a single text."

It may startle some, but it is nevertheless strictly true, that we shall never be free from the danger of return to the communion of Rome, until we learn to look at Popery as an outgrowth of priestcraft and superstition, *not incompatible with deep personal piety*, with a profound reverence for Scripture, and a sincere and earnest desire for its perusal by all men.

The only real preservative against Popery is a firm belief in the indwelling of the Spirit of God in the heart of the individual Christian; a deep conviction that this,—the greatest of all blessings,—may be enjoyed apart from the transmissive agency of any Church whatever; that it is a gift separable alike from Scripture and from sacrament; that it is so, simply because it is the action of God *on the heart* and not on the intellect; and that, therefore, while it neither slights nor supersedes any appointed means of grace, it is independent of them all. Without this dew of Heaven *the soil* will be barren, and vain the sowing of the seed; with it, *the seed*, falling into good ground, will bring forth fruit vigorously and abundantly.

It was because this great truth was neglected in the Church of the third and fourth centuries that ancient Christianity became gloomy and ascetic; that fasts, austerities, and flight from the world, told of a religion from which individual and domestic purity, and consequently joy, had fled; a religion in which terror had supplanted love, and the liberty with which Christ makes His people free been exchanged for a law wrapt in purgatorial fires, and clothed in deeper thunders than even those of Sinai.

Upon this backward path do men, earnest and devout, once more invite us to enter, as the only refuge from prevailing restlessness and unbelief. Of such, Dante well says:—

"They chew the cud, but cannot part the hoof." *

E.

* "Purg." c. xvi.: Pollock's. "In mystical interpretation the chewing of the cud signifies the duty of serious meditation on God's word; and the division of the hoof signifies the discerning between good and evil—between God's institutions and man's inventions."

(The "Readings with a Sceptic" will be resumed next month.)

Standing Note.—Whatever may be the *apparent* character or tendency of any Articles found in "The Interpreter," we wish it to be distinctly understood that *they are not intended* to encourage secession either from the Communion of the Church of England, or from any body of Protestant Dissenters. Secession leads by inevitable consequences to sectarianism; and sectarianism we abhor. Our sole aim is to promote such an amount of freedom of thought and liberty of action in church matters, *within* existing bodies, as may best tend to further that true Christian Unity which is *counteractive* of all Schism "in the Body."

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[*All communications for the Editor should be addressed to* No. 14, Bartholomew Close, Aldersgate Street, London, E.C.]

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at,—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints, as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine.*

THE KINGDOM.

THE term "kingdom of God" occurs in the New Testament about seventy times; "kingdom of heaven" about twenty times; and other references to this same kingdom probably thirty times more.

The signification of the term is not, however, always the same.

Sometimes it implies that which is *subjective*—a moral and spiritual condition. It does so when our

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BRITISH MUSEUM

Lord says to the Pharisees, who demanded *when* the kingdom of God should come,—"The kingdom of God is *within* you" (Luke xvii. 21); unless εντος υμων is to be translated *among you* (as in *marg.*), in which case it probably means that the kingdom was embodied in Himself. It does so when St. Paul speaks of it as consisting in *doing* right, and *being* happy; or, as he expresses it, in "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xiv. 17).

More frequently, however, the term indicates an outward or *objective* thing,—a *reign* of God, announced as approaching; a promised kingdom, in which the saints should rule; a government, of which "the poor of this world, rich in faith," are, under Christ, the "heirs" (Jas. ii. 5). It is to the passages that speak of it in this latter aspect, that we are chiefly desirous of directing attention; our special purpose being to ascertain whether or no they point only to a further and fuller development of good at the millennium, or whether they refer to a dispensation yet to come —that of the resurrection.

We do not at this time propose to enter into any discussion of the various opinions that have, at different periods, been set forth, advocated, and controverted, as to the precise *time* when this kingdom ought to be regarded as commencing, or when it may be supposed to come to a termination. Neither shall we deal with vexed questions, either about the millennium, or, as to the exact meaning of that difficult passage in St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians

(1 Cor. xv. 24 and 28) in which he speaks of Christ as finally delivering the kingdom up to the Father, that God may be "all in all;" beyond observing, that as the *essential dominion* of God never had beginning or limit, and never will have increase or end, the passage *can* only refer to that mediatorial kingdom of the Redeemer which will cease when all the ends for which it was set up are accomplished.

Of this kingdom it has been well said, that the great characteristics *at present* are, "mystery and forbearance;" and those of the future, "manifestation and triumph." It is for what is revealed regarding the full manifestation and final triumph of the kingdom that we propose, in this paper, to make diligent search.

In doing so, we shall find it advantageous to divide the inquiry into two parts; to confine ourselves, first, to an examination of those passages in the Gospels which refer to the advent, progress, and nature of the kingdom; and to reserve, for separate consideration, the fuller developments furnished in the Acts and the Epistles.

The former,—the testimony of the Gospels,—is very comprehensive; embracing, first, the *message* of John, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. iii. 2); then, the *prolongation* of that message by Christ,—first personally (Matt. iv. 23), and afterwards by the agency of the apostles (Matt. x. 7): then the *characteristics* of those who should enter the kingdom—viz., humility (Mark x. 14); poverty of

spirit (Matt. v. 3); perseverance (Luke ix. 62); open profession by baptism (John iii. 5); consequent tribulation (Acts xiv. 22); and independence of all human authority (Matt. xi. 12, and x. 32): then the *hindrances* to its attainment—viz., riches (Matt. xix. 24); self-righteousness (Matt. xxi. 31); self-indulgence (Mark ix. 47); injustice, impurity, dishonesty, covetousness, drunkenness, and reviling (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10): and finally, the *present realization* of it, in connection with a new and spiritual birth (John iii. 3); a final judgment both of quick and dead (Matt. xiii. 39—43); and various forms of honour and dignity, such as—brilliant attire (Matt. xiii. 43); eating and drinking with Christ (Matt. xxvi. 29; Luke xiv. 15; xxii. 18 and 30); and royal rule and dominion (Luke xxii. 29). The whole being *described* as—glad tidings (Luke viii. 1); and a free gift (Luke xii. 32); but not of this age (John xviii. 36); and therefore retributive (Matt. xvi. 27; Luke ix. 26; Luke xiv. 13, 14); compensative (Luke xviii. 29); and restorative (Acts i. 6); an inheritance to be enjoyed after death, and everlasting in duration (Matt. xxv. 34—46).

As we are not writing for the indolent or the careless, we stop here to request, that before going further, our readers will take the trouble to examine all these texts of Scripture; and then, with the impression made by a consideration of the whole fresh on the mind, to ask themselves whether it is possible to imagine these various particulars can find a fulfilment in the *present state* of the world and the Church;—or at the *millen-*

nium, taking the term in its popular acceptation, as simply implying the general or universal spread of the Gospel; or, finally, on the supposition, that after death, *every individual* of mankind is destined to proceed at once either to heaven or to hell,—using these words also in their popular acceptation? We cannot see *how*, in their entireness, these various representations *can* be intelligently received, and become the object of our faith, apart from the expectation of a dispensation yet to come.

Keeping these general statements in view, we now proceed to the investigation of ten passages in particular, as *preliminary* to the consideration of the more explicit teaching of the Apostles after Pentecost.

(i.) Matt. v. 5—"*Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.*"

This promise repeatedly occurs in the Old Testament (Psa. xxii.; xxxvii.; lxix.; Isa. xi. 4; xxix. 19). The question is, *when and how* does it find its fulfilment? The popular idea is, that *all* the beatitudes, and this, therefore, among the number, are but so many aspects or phases of the man who is new-born in Christ; that he who is "meek," in the sense here spoken of, is a renewed man, and that by and through the renewal he has experienced, he is at once "poor in spirit," a "mourner" (for sin), "merciful," "pure," and so forth; and therefore that the inheritance of the earth referred to, *is entered upon*, when such persons get, as they often do, more enjoyment of the real good of this world, than the proud and contentious. But this interpretation is far from being satisfactory; for first, the beatitude in question, like the other beatitudes, is clearly spoken of as a

future gift; it is not said the meek *do* inherit the earth, but *shall* do so; and, next, there is no reason whatever for merging all the blessed characteristics referred to by our Lord in one new life following conversion. It is as perverse to deny that a man may be meek and yet not spiritual, as to assert that all spiritual men are meek. As a fact, it is certainly not so. Why not, then, accept *this class* of texts as they stand, and allow, that in the age to come, it is as certain that the meek will inherit the earth, as that "a cup of cold water given to a disciple in the name of a disciple" will "not lose its reward"? as certain as it is that those who have refused to help the people of God when under trial and persecution, will hear the awful words, "Depart, ye cursed!"

(ii.) Matt. vi. 10—"*Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*"

That this prayer implies a promise few will be inclined to dispute. The question returns, *when and how* will it find a fulfilment? The usual reply is, "At the millennium, *after which* Christ comes to judgment." But how happens it, then, that the Lord himself says, "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" *i. e.*, faith in the promise that He will avenge (Luke xviii. 8); and how is it that, to the last, the disciples of Christ are always spoken of as "a little flock," and "the gate" of entrance a "narrow way," which "few" find? It seems impossible to reconcile the universal conversion of mankind with the fewness of Christ's people, except on the supposition of a dispensation yet to come?

(iii.) Matt. vii. 21—23—"*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.*"

That in this passage "the kingdom" is spoken of as a future thing, no one disputes. Further, it will be

admitted that all the parties introduced are *professed* disciples; although some are unrecognized by the Judge,—"I never knew you!" But observe, they are not spoken of as persons who shall be cast into the lake of fire. They are in the position of the "foolish virgins," *shut out* from the honour and dignity which they had made sure was their own; for had they not eaten and drunk in the presence of the Lord?—had He not taught in "their streets"?—they, of course, being His supporters and approving listeners; and were they not, therefore, fully entitled to rank among the best? To say that Christ can bestow no mercy on those who are not, in the highest sense, "one" with Him, is practically to deny all gradation, either of reward or punishment.

(iv.) Matt. viii. 12—"*The children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness.*"

This is usually interpreted as signifying that the Jews, "the children of the kingdom," in consequence of their rejection of Christ, shall be *cast into hell*, while believing Gentiles enter heaven. But this cannot be sustained. The figure, which is a remarkably striking one, is based on an allusion to the lustre of the brilliantly illuminated rooms in which bridal feasts were generally held, and to the darkness without, which would seem so very deep to any one ejected from within. The reference is plainly to the bridal union of Christ and the elect Church, from which high dignity the Jewish nation was by its unbelief shut out; being superseded by that election of grace which includes Gentiles from every tongue and tribe under heaven. The weeping and gnashing of teeth, the tears and anger consequent on so bitter a disappointment, fitly represent the *mixed* feelings by which the Jews now, and at the resurrection, will be affected when they awake to the consciousness of having cast away their birthright.

(v.) Matt. xii. 28—"*The kingdom of God is come unto you.*"

It is come, says Christ, inasmuch as I "cast out devils by the Spirit of God." The *essential idea* of the kingdom then is, the overthrow of Satan, and this, not merely in the sense of delivering souls from sin, but *bodies* from "possession," whatever that term might imply. It is, therefore, the undoing of all that Satan has done, the removal of *past consequences* arising out of his long-permitted usurpation, as well as of evils connected with his present continuance. In this sense the kingdom of God has been, more or less, "coming" during the past 1,800 years; its "coming" has been seen, not only in the destruction of Jerusalem (Matt. xvi. 28), and in the fall of paganism in the Roman empire, but in every alleviation of human suffering produced by the spread of the benevolent principles of the Gospel. These things, however, are but the precursors of that more complete and triumphant coming which will one day be witnessed, when, in the clouds of heaven, and surrounded by His holy angels, the feet of Jesus of Nazareth shall once more stand on Mount Olivet (Acts i. 11, compared with Zech. xiv. 4).

(vi.) Matt. xxi. 43—"*The kingdom of God shall be taken from you.*"

In what sense? Not, certainly, in the sense of all offers of mercy being withdrawn. Not that they were never more to hear of Christ or His Gospel; but taken from them, so far as *headship* was concerned. The *root-idea* of the kingdom from the first was the calling out and separation of an elect Church, by and through whom the blessings of reconciliation and restoration might be subsequently extended. That Church was originally the Jewish nation, and it was because they despised this their birthright, that it was taken from

them, and transferred to an elect people, Jews and Gentiles, selected out of every nation under heaven.

(vii.) Matt. xxvi. 29—"*I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.*"

Nothing is more certain than that the Apostles had, *to the last* day of Christ's being with them, what we should call carnal or Jewish notions of the coming kingdom. The idea of an actual, visible reign, never seems to be out of their minds for a moment; and the most anxious question they put to Him *after* the resurrection is:—"Wilt thou, at this time, restore the kingdom to Israel?"

Now, if our views of the future are right, how strange it seems that, to such men, with such prejudices and tendencies, our Lord should simply say:—"As to *the times* and seasons, these are with God alone (Acts i. 7); but as to *the nature* of the kingdom, I have already told you, that, as in the time of my humiliation, I drank of the fruit of the vine with you, so I will 'drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom;' I have justified your saying, that 'Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God' (Luke xiv. 15); and I have assured you that 'I have appointed unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel' (Luke xxii. 29, 30). Let *that* satisfy you."

Now, we say, if all this is merely intended to indicate the spiritual triumphs of the Gospel,—as we are so frequently told it is,—such teaching to *such* men is as *unlike* the conduct of Him who said, "In my Father's house are many mansions"—"*if it were not so, I would have told you;*" (which certainly implies, I would never have allowed you to continue under a delusion,) as anything in the world can be.

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(viii.) Luke xii. 32—"*It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*"

In this kingdom it is possible even now to be laying up treasure; yet it is a gift only to be actually received at the coming of the Lord (v. 32—40). *Then* is it that all will be reckoned with, and receive according to their deserts (v. 41—48). It is to be *preceded* by "fire on the earth," by the Lord's own fiery "baptism," and by the divisions and distractions which were even then impending (v. 49—57). It is to open up a day of reward for those who have by love and kindness shared the burdens of the poor and the afflicted. "Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just" (xiv. 14).

(ix.) Luke xix. 11—27—"*They thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.*"

Observe how the Lord deals with this misapprehension. He does not say, "This notion of yours about a visible kingdom is *altogether wrong;*" but he simply recites a parable, the object of which is only to show that the manifestation of it is *deferred.* If their notion of the kingdom was *fundamentally* erroneous, He certainly leaves them in their error, a course which, we have already seen, *He never pursued.* He does not even say, "Ye are not able to bear the truth yet;" He directly and distinctly *confirms,* while *purifying* their expectations.

(x.) John xviii. 36—"*My kingdom is not of this world*" (or age).

The Romanist practically says, *it is;* and, on the strength of that belief, *unites in one man,* as the vicar and representative of Christ on earth, both priestly and regal functions. So does the Russian Czar, when, blending in himself the same offices, he becomes, like the old Roman emperor, the *Pontifex Maximus* of his people, and consents to be regarded

by the vulgar in the light of a god. So *dreams* the antichrist, which is yet to come, hoping that by such a union, universal monarchy will finally be established, and the rival claims of the Redeemer be, by fraud or violence crushed out.

The *controversial* use of this text, as if it were aimed at modern religious establishments, which, whatever may be their excellencies or defects, certainly proceed on the principle that Christ's kingdom *is not* of this world, and that, *therefore*, spiritual power should be subordinated to temporal, has led to its *true* meaning dropping out of sight. The words clearly imply that Christ's kingdom, though not of this age, *is* of another. Hence the inscription on the cross, "the King of the Jews," must not be altered to, "He said I am" so; for He actually *was* their monarch, although not yet manifested as such.

But what force would the expression have, if the kingship and kingdom referred to, were purely spiritual? if it involved no kingship *as man*, and no kingdom over man, except that which God from the creation has exercised over all His creatures? Had the case been put thus before Pilate, there can be little doubt but that he, with his previous disposition to release Christ, would have replied, "This is a question of religious creed, with which I do not intermeddle." But he could not withstand the cry, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend; whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar." If, therefore, it be true, as it certainly is, that Christ was put to death for blasphemy,—for making Himself the Son of God, it is equally true that He died for making Himself a king, *in a sense which was supposed to involve* treason against Cæsar.

The fact that the earliest apostacy consisted in the setting up of a claim, on the part of the Church, *to rule* over men in the affairs of this world as Christ's vicegerent,

is in itself proof that the expectations of primitive Christians, in the second and third centuries, pointed in that direction; and there is little doubt but that the men of the fourth century regarded the downfall of paganism only as introductory to the full development of this cherished hope. The Church was then big with a false expectation (compare Rev. xii. 2, with Isa. xxvi. 18) that Christians would now be kings on earth, and the Church the seat of universal empire. The almost immediate *rise* of a power called "the Devil, and Satan, which *deceiveth* the whole world," and which is subsequently exhibited to us as the great persecutor of the saints, was the consequence of this perversion (Rev. xii. 1—8). It is certain that it was before this antichrist, and not before paganism, that the true Church fled "into the wilderness."

The existence of the false, however, *supposes* the existence of the true; just as hypocrisy supposes virtue, and falsehood, verity. That which Rome merely affects, Christ realizes; the government which priests falsely claim *in this age*, Christ bestows on the elect in the age that is to come.

But we must pause. The character and duration of the mediatorial kingdom of Christ,—the real question at issue,—cannot be decided by the testimony of the Gospels *alone*. The Holy Spirit, who came to lead the Apostles into all truth,—the Blessed Comforter and Monitor of the Church, must be *the expounder* of the kingdom as He is of everything else in the Gospels. In the testimony of the Acts and the Epistles, which will form the subject of our next paper, we shall endeavour to discover what the character of that exposition really is.

A.

THE MINISTER.

COUNT AGÉNOR DE GASPARIN AND DR. MERLE D'AUBIGNÉ.

Chapter VIII.—The Reformation. (Clergy.)

THE Reformation was unquestionably, in all its essential elements, a revolt against priest*craft;* but it was not, in the same sense at least, a revolt against priests. On the contrary, the clergy were, from the first, among its most active promoters, and, to the last, they guided and directed its movements.

To a certain extent, the proceedings of Luther and his coadjutors emancipated the human mind from the trammels of ecclesiastical rule, but only within limits; for if the Reformation closed the confessional, it opened the pulpit, and the thunders of the one not unfrequently more than compensated for the absence of the other. It is probable that neither Pope nor prelate ever exercised half the moral power that was wielded by Luther in Germany, by Calvin at Geneva, and by Knox in Scotland.

The history of this great movement is a familiar one. It has been often traced; sometimes with exultation, sometimes with sadness; for it was, at best, a chequered scene, and its progress and immediate results were alternately

calculated to excite high hopes, and to occasion painful despondency.

Into that history we do not now propose to enter. We intend to view it only under one aspect,—that which it bears towards apostolic institutions for the sustentation and spread of the Gospel of Christ.

We have already said that one of its leading characteristics was the supercession of the priest by the preacher, a change which naturally sprang out of the spirit of intellectual inquiry that had been evoked. But the clergy were not disbanded, nor was Church property, except to a limited extent, secularized.

Things remaining thus, it became necessary that some ecclesiastical organization should be established with which the State could deal; that such an arrangement should be made between the clergy and civil governors, as might seem best calculated to ensure the harmonious working, each in its own sphere, of temporal and spiritual authority.

The result was, National Establishments, with their fixed creeds, and popular theologies, and authorized assemblies, instead of centralization at Rome. Under these the parish, the Church, the sacraments, all remained as heretofore in the hands of the priest, although under the new name of "Presbyter," which, as Milton humourously but truly enough says, "is but old priest *writ large*."

The one thing perfected and completed by the reformers was separation from the Papacy. The rest was a compromise; sometimes with the monarch, sometimes with the clergy, and sometimes with one another. Idolatries, superstitious frauds, monkery, celibacy, Madonnas, Mariolatry, purgatory,—all these fled, like birds of night, before an open Bible and a free Gospel. But ecclesiastical power re-

mained; sometimes vested in a hierarchy, sometimes embodied in a presbytery, but always controlled, more or less, by the lay element involved in the headship of the Crown.

Nor could it probably at that time have been ordered otherwise; for the theories of Carlstadt and of Zuingle,—scriptural as they were in many respects,—could find no expression, except in deplorable excesses, only to be excused on the ground that, to the newly couched eye, truths, like men, are often seen "as trees walking." At a much later period, when this apology could no longer be made, Puritans and Covenanters, Independent Colonists and Scottish Presbyterians, although professedly enemies to persecution, proved themselves quite as unable to comprehend the first principles of religious liberty as either Episcopalians or Papists.

It is a favourite theory with many, that religious persecution is to be traced to national establishments. No error can be greater. It proceeds on the supposition, utterly fallacious, that the reformed faith is a State creation, and the English Church a purely parliamentary one. As well might it be pretended that the common law of England is the arbitrary expression of an individual will, or the customs on which it rests the result of legislative decisions.

Deeper, far deeper, amid the profoundest sources of our national life, must we look for the elements that called into being our own Church; and equally extended must be the range of our inquiry before we can reach the foundations of the sister churches of France and Switzerland, of Germany, of Hungary, or of Sweden. National establishments, the product, as we have already said, of the Reformation, were not a choice, but a necessity; in no other way could Popery *then* have been resisted; by no other means could liberty

then have been preserved; for public opinion, when undivided, was then, as now, the sole arbiter of nations, and it knew of no other alternative than that of a theocracy. The clergy, Protestant as much as Papal, ruled the world.

Man is a spirit, and the spiritual, if it once take form and shape as *organized power*, will always be able to defy that which is merely temporal. Materialized, it may degenerate into superstition; but subdued it cannot be, so long as it is under the guidance of earthly leaders, supported by the united influences of learning, wealth, and station, and associated with even a moderate share of moral and spiritual excellence. The power that overturned the Paganism of Rome, that subdued the desolating hordes of Attila and Genseric, that framed the Papacy, that divided the spoil at the Reformation, and that to this day rules every people under heaven, has little to fear from any enemy, so long as the disciples of the Redeemer hug their chains, and tremblingly shrink from participating in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free.

But to return. After a time, although not without occasional difficulties, the national churches, one by one, settled down into comparative quiet, and, except in relation to their common enemy the Pope, nearly all of them speedily subsided into something like a state of lethargic indifference. As the teacher taught, so the people believed; their zeal for the faith rising or falling with the enthusiasm or carelessness of the particular minister placed over them.

England alone formed the exception. *There*,—from the very first,—owing probably to the retention of much that was abandoned on the continent, a clerical party always existed, who, with their followers, steadily opposed Anglicanism as semi-popery; determinately, and in spite of all

opposition, kept alive *the sense of sacredness*, as attaching to individual convictions, and claimed the right of exercising private judgment, as freely in opposition to prelacy as to Popery; nay, even to State authority itself, when it supported what they deemed to be error.

To these men, and to that spirit of resistance to arbitrary rule which they fostered from generation to generation, England, under God, owes her liberties. *But for them*, the nation would probably have returned, if not in fact, yet in spirit, to the ecclesiastical subjection of their forefathers.

But the Puritans, however steadily they rejected prelacy and vestments, never thought of abandoning clericalism. To have done this would have been to abandon a theology which, however tiresome to us, they loved, and gladly listened to, hour after hour, with ever increasing interest. To them the minister was as the prophet of old, and his never-ending divisions and subdivisions as exciting as the eloquence of Chrysostom.

The theology itself, in many respects, differed little from that of their opponents and persecutors; for both parties alike professed to honour the great African Father from whom it was mainly derived. But the mode of handling was different. The Anglican sought to adapt his Augustinianism to all classes of men, by more or less concealing its sterner features, by somewhat lowering its demands, and by blending with it ceremonial observances, which at once refined the taste, relieved the consciences of the worshippers, and gave an air of cheerfulness to all the services of religion. The Puritan, on the other hand, sought to intensify the spirituality of the Gospel; for it was, in his eye, a provision only for the elect. All his tendencies were in the direction of asceticism, and he too often imparted to a religion of

love the harshness and severity which characterized himself, not merely as a pilgrim, but as a persecuted outcast. *Both* were thoroughly scholastic, and both therefore were frequently unscriptural, alike in their statements of truth and in the spirit with which they enforced it.

The result, as a whole, of this united clericalism and scholasticism was disastrous. The Reformation ceased to advance. The Word of God could not have "free course and be glorified" so long as it was embarrassed by a set of human deductions, under the influence of which no man could read his Bible "as a little child," or draw the living water pure and fresh from the fountain.

And so things remain to this day. "After three centuries of free inquiry, deliberate reflection, and biblical intelligence, it is much more than we can say, that we have ourselves got clear of the theory of the Papacy in every one of its articles; and assuredly we are far from having as yet thrown off all those superstitions that sprung up in the second and third centuries, and which the Romish Church inherited and expanded. The work of Luther was a glorious beginning, that still waits for its consummation. Had it been complete and consistent in principle and in practice, it would probably have been universal in its actual spread. The Papacy still lives, and *it must live until Protestantism shall be reformed.*"

E.

READINGS WITH A SCEPTIC.

§ 6, MATTHEW, Chap. iii. 13—17.

The Baptism of Jesus.

Persons—Jesus and John. *Place*—Bethany (beyond Jordan).

"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him," &c., &c.

SCEPTIC.—Before we proceed, allow me to say, in reference to our last conversation, that I agree with you in thinking that any notion of the Gospels being mere fraudulent inventions, is thoroughly absurd; but it is admitted there are serious discrepancies in these narratives, and it is to me difficult to conceive of such variations being allowed, if all alike are to be regarded as inspired.

Believer. The difficulty that presses upon you, granting its existence, is not, in my judgment, so serious as you seem to imagine. To meet it, you must, I think, fully recognize *the human element* in the narratives, with which Divine inspiration does not at all interfere. The minds of the writers were, I imagine, as free from any *conscious* control as yours and mine are at the present moment. They had, I suppose, access to common sources of information, which they made use of, each according to his own judgment; each had his own particular object in writing; and each, I presume, was permitted to execute that design in his own way. Hence the Gospels are distinct; one writer frequently supplies the omissions of another; and it

is only by reading the whole that we get the entire narrative. Whether the later writers borrowed more or less from the earlier, sometimes extracting literally and sometimes condensing, is uncertain, and to my mind unimportant.

The great source of information for all of them would doubtless be those memorials of the teachings of the Apostles,—some documentary, and some traditional,—which were treasured up in every church they had visited; and one only wonders that, being compiled in this way, by independent men, the real discrepancies are so few and unimportant.

All this, let me say, may be held without any denial of what is usually termed *plenary* inspiration. It is, I grant, inconsistent with the views of those who hold to *verbal* or mechanical inspiration, in a sense which seems to imply that the writers of the sacred books were merely conduits or channels of Divine utterances. For me it is quite enough to feel assured that the Holy Spirit so acted on the writers, that they were *specially enabled* to accomplish the work they undertook, and, as Mr. Alford observes, were, by that circumstance, placed in a position "which distinguishes them from all other writers in the world, and their work from all other works. The *men* were inspired, the *books* are the results of that inspiration; but the treasure is given us in earthen vessels; it becomes our own, as only it could be ours, in connection with the imperfection of human speech, the limitations of human thought, and the variety incident, first, to individual character, and then to manifold transcription, and the lapse of ages." But we must proceed. The Baptism of Jesus is the subject before us. Have you any observations to make upon it?

Sc. The *miraculous* part of the narrative, the "opening of the heavens," the "dove," and the "voice," I leave for the present. These, and other similar statements, must stand or fall with the entire supernatural element in the New Testament. It seems to me mere trifling to admit one miracle, and to reject another, according to our ideas of probability or otherwise. Satisfy me that the miracles of the New Testament, generally, stand on evidence which ought not to be resisted, and I accept the whole. But there are one or two particulars on which I should like to hear what you have to say. I do not myself comprehend what is meant by "fulfilling all righteousness," regarded as the justification of John for baptizing One who was, according to his own account, so infinitely above him. Indeed, I cannot see why Christ should have been baptized at all.

B. Jesus, I think, comes to be baptized just as any other devout Jew might have come, for as yet He was known in no other character. He had, like others, heard the words of the prophet, His forerunner, and, in obedience to the call, he hastens to the baptism. John, in the presumed disciple, recognizes* the Master, and *objects*; but is immediately silenced by the remark to which you have referred. To understand it, we must bear in mind that Jesus was a Jew, He had received circumcision, though born without sin. "He was redeemed as the first-born, though Himself the Redeemer; in all probability He offered every sacrifice which was required of an Israelite (as we see in one

* "John knew the Lord, and yet knew Him not. He knew Him not, according to his own testimony (John i. 31), as the Messias and the Son of God; but he knew Him as One whose whole life, from the beginning, had silently cried, Which of you convinceth me of sin? Before this man bows down, in the irrepressible emotion of his own most profound contrition, the sinful man in the greatest prophet."—Stier.

instance, at least, that of the passover), though Himself the Propitiatory and Paschal Lamb, the archetype and substance of all these shadows; He visited the temple and the synagogue. He humbly submitted to every custom and ordinance in Israel; and even when no sin attached to them, to those which were not ordained of God; so likewise must He be baptized 'into the coming Messiah,' which is nevertheless Himself. In this baptism, inasmuch as it was the last external commandment of God to Israel, '*all* righteousness' was fulfilled by Him."* It was therefore to be *suffered* as a transitional act.

It was indeed most appropriate that the Messiah should not be behind His countrymen in thus publicly acknowledging the mission of John, or that He should even *seem* to undervalue the personal purity which was symbolized by the baptism.

As to the miraculous portion of the narrative, it is clear to my own mind that the Evangelist wishes it to be understood that the "opening of heaven," the descent of the dove-like Spirit, and the declaration, "This is my beloved Son," were not visible or audible to any but Christ and John. On a similar occasion, described by another Evangelist (John xii. 29), the people that stood by said it "thundered," and others said, "An angel spake to him;" both remarks indicating that they did not understand what was said. There was certainly *no spectacle* before the multitude. And why should there have been? "The opening of heaven, *i. e., of the world of the Spirit,* is nothing else than the revealing of the spiritual world to the spirit." It is neither material nor imaginative, but a *real* effect produced by the Spirit of God upon the spirit of man. It

* Stier's "Words of the Lord Jesus."

is not till after this *official recognition* that the ministry of Christ properly begins. This was His "anointing."

Let me ask you to notice in the answer of John, "I have need to be baptized of thee," the marked distinction made between Christ and other men, *long before* his Divinity was recognized. Luke records that John's mother exclaimed, when she saw Mary coming, "Whence is this to me, that *the mother of my Lord* should come to me?" (Luke i. 43); and Peter, at a later period, exclaims, "Thou shalt never wash my feet" (John xiii. 6—8). It would seem as if indications of superhuman dignity manifested themselves in Him from the very first. T.

INTERPRETATIONS.—No. 8.

Hebrews iv. 15, "*For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*"

Commentators.—"*Tempted as we are*—Both in trials by affliction, and by temptations to sin."—(*Origen* and *Theophylact*, quoted by *Bloomfield*.) "He was susceptible of being excited by the power of temptation, for his nature was human."—(*Stuart*.) "It must have been, it often was, with him (Christ) an effort to do the will of God."—(*Dr. Candlish*.)

The difficulty, in relation to this text, is to see how Christ *could* be tempted as we are, since His nature, though human nature, was sinless. Yet if He were not thus tempted, say many, how can He sympathize, and where would be the force of the apostle's reasoning? The late Mr. Irving felt this, and wandered into speculations which issued in his deposition as a minister of the Church of Scotland. Mr. Newton, by a similar course, has of late years almost broken up, *as a body*, those Christians who are usually distinguished by the term Plymouth Brethren. Many a child of God has returned from wanderings in this direction with a wounded heart and bleeding footsteps.

The point *generally overlooked*, I think, is this. The Apostle is speaking to *believers*, and to believers *as such;* not to the world at large, nor yet to double-minded men. When, therefore, he tells them that their Great High Priest can *sympathize*, being tempted as they are, he refers, obviously, to temptations which assault believers, regarded as persons in whom the Holy Spirit dwells. It is easy to see that Christ was *not* tempted as a drunkard is, who has fallen into habits of intemperance; nor yet, as those vicious persons generally are, who from early youth have degraded their entire nature. Believers who have been brought up in the fear and love of God from youth *are not so tempted.* They have not, and cannot have, the same overwhelming tendencies to immorality, which those persons have who have been the habitual victims of profligacy. They may be tempted, of course, in one sense, to any or every conceivable crime, but *if they are in their right mind*, the temptation will have more that is distressing about it than seductive.

On the contrary, if they live carelessly, if they indulge in bad habits, if they imbibe the spirit of the world rather than that of Christ, temptation to evil will become increasingly powerful; they will like it, be seduced by it, and more or less suffer under it, as all do, "who like to slide, yet do not like to fall." But such persons have no ground for saying, that in this sense, Christ was tempted as they are. The Apostle is clearly referring to temptations *from without;* to temptations *unsolicited by ourselves;* to temptations which are to us always more or less seductive owing to our depraved natures, but which to Christ were simply and exclusively distressing, and therefore involved no sin. L.

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[*All communications for the Editor should be addressed to* No. 14, Bartholomew Close, Aldersgate Street, London, E.C.]

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at,—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints, as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine.*

THE KINGDOM.

(SECOND PAPER.)

FROM the Acts and the Epistles we have selected the following passages as *illustrative* of those we have already quoted from the Gospels.

(xi.) Acts xix. 8, 9—"*Three months disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.*"

The point to be noticed here is, that apparently the one topic of Paul's ministry at Ephesus,—first for three months

[Registered for transmission abroad.]

in the Synagogue, and afterwards for two years in daily disputations "in the school of Tyrannus," was "the kingdom of God," and the things concerning it. On this subject the Apostle had most probably been instructed by special revelation, either at the time when God made known to him the mystery "which had been kept secret since the world began" (Ephes. iii. 3), or when he was informed as to the nature and permanence of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. xi. 23—28); for Paul was not among the Apostles with whom Christ, during the forty days that elapsed between the Resurrection and Ascension, so often conversed, "speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts i. 3).

Whether these communications related *exclusively* to the final triumph of the Redeemer, as the King of His people, and the subduer of Satan, may fairly be doubted; but that they involved the interpretation of all those passages in the Law and the Prophets which speak of Messiah—His advent, life, death, and final victory, can scarcely admit of question. Whatever this particular teaching, however, might be, it seems now to be in great measure lost; for scarcely on any point do real Christians differ more widely than in the views they take of that kingdom which is yet the object of their common hope. Most of us have come to account those portions of Divine revelation, which speak most distinctly about it, as too obscure to be clearly understood; many number them among the secret things that belong to God alone; and many more merge all other hopes in one glorious expectation, that by the preaching of the Cross, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the world will eventually be brought into spiritual subjection to Christ. Any spiritual excitement, therefore, which ends in the conversion of an unusual number of individuals, is hailed as the precursor, and welcomed as the pledge of greater blessings yet to be vouchsafed.

The question is,—Was this supposed ultimate triumph

of the Gospel the truth which the Apostle taught under the appellation of "things concerning the kingdom"? We are constrained to say, *we think not*. It is indeed quite true that in the touching interview he had with the elders at Ephesus before his departure for Jerusalem (Acts xx. 25), he speaks as if the doctrine of the kingdom embraced in its capacious arms everything else. But it is equally true that, at Lystra, at Iconium, and at Antioch, he treats "the Faith," and "the Kingdom," as if they were distinct; for when he confirms the souls of the disciples, and exhorts them *to continue in* "the Faith," he reminds them that it is only through "much tribulation" we can "*enter into* the Kingdom" (Acts xiv. 22). He speaks of the one (the Faith) as a thing already possessed, and in which they were to remain steadfast; he regards the other (the Kingdom) as a future inheritance, which could only be attained through sorrow, *i. e.*, in connection with a lengthened course of discipline.

There is, undoubtedly, an important sense in which Christ is reigning *now* as the monarch of the Church; but it is equally clear also, that He *waits* for "the kingdom," properly so called. So David writes, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand *until* I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Psa. cx. 1). When this is done, and not till then, will Christ leave the right hand of the Father, and be *enthroned* over the riches of the universe. At present He "rules" only "in the midst of His enemies" (ver. 2). This predictive statement, which is three times quoted in the New Testament (Luke xx. 42; Acts ii. 35; Heb. i. 13), finds its explanation in our Lord's own parable, delivered to the disciples "because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear," in which He speaks of Himself under the figure of the nobleman who went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return to take possession (Luke xix. 12—27).

St. Paul, in his epistle to Timothy (2 Ep. iv. 1), unites "the kingdom" with "the appearing" of Christ, and the judgment of "quick and dead;" and in the Hebrews (xii. 26, 27), he distinctly teaches that the reception of "the kingdom" which cannot be moved will be amid shakings, both of earth and heaven, compared with which the coming down of God on Mount Sinai, terrible as it was, will sink into insignificance. *Then* will the promise made to Abraham find its complete fulfilment *in the precise way in which he looked for it*, viz., in the possession of "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. xi. 10). *Then* will his descendants, "so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable," receive the promises which on earth they saw "afar off," and in the faith of which they died (xi. 12—16). *Then*, and not till then, will it be seen that in Abraham, not the elect only, but "all families of the earth,"—"all nations," are indeed "blessed" (Gen. xii. 3; xxii. 18).

Dr. Alford and many others argue that the phrase "*these all*" (Heb. xi. 13), should be referred, *not* to the descendants of Abraham, as the immediate context would seem to imply, but to the patriarchs enumerated in the preceding verses. This cannot, however, be admitted, since no promise of inheriting Canaan (the object of the faith in question) was made either to Abel, to Enoch, or to Noah. On the other hand, as Whitby remarks, it is obvious enough that *all* the descendants of Abraham did not die, in any spiritual sense of the term, in faith. How then, it will be said, can the words apply to them?

The true answer probably is, that, allowing for individual exceptions, *which is always done in general statements*, the Israelites *did* all die in the firm faith that the promises made to Abraham would be fulfilled. It is most remarkable, that in the darkest periods of their history,

however personally immoral or corrupt they might be,—amid prevailing carnality, and the most erroneous views of the *nature* of the kingdom promised them, the nation never lost sight of the promise made to their great ancestor; they lived, day by day, in hope of its accomplishment, and they died in the belief that whatever calamities might befall them or their children, the Israelite could not be lost, nor the promise of God be made of none effect. Such being the prevailing expectation of the Jew everywhere, it need excite no surprise that "the things concerning the kingdom,"—its true character and certain approach, should be the perpetual theme of the apostolic ministry.

(xii.) Acts xxiii. 6, and xxvi. 6—8—"*Of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question,*" compared with, "*I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers.*"

Let these two passsages be carefully considered in their connection, and they will, we think, be found to throw light, first on each other, and then on the views preached by the Apostle. In the first passage, Paul is before the Council at Jerusalem,—men ravening for his blood; when, taking advantage of their divisions, he exclaims, "I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." That this was true, and that, therefore, it was perfectly legitimate *to say so then*, we do not doubt. But it certainly does not apppear so at first sight; for he was obviously not called in question for any mere Pharisaic opinion, such as "that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" (Acts xxiv. 15), but for doctrines which were alike unpalatable both to Pharisees and Sadducees.

By the second passage the first is explained. "I stand," he says, "and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers; unto which promise our twelve

tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. *For which hope's sake*, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. *Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?*" Here he evidently connects two things together which are usually treated of as if they had no connection with each other,—"the hope of Israel," and "the resurrection of the dead,"—the risen Christ, and "the things which the prophets and Moses did say should come" (xxvi. 6, and 22, 23).

Now, the theme of all the prophets unquestionably was, *a triumphant Messiah*, and the fulfilment, in and by Him, of all those glorious predictions of a golden age which so enrich their discourses. Paul *implies* by what he says, that he looked for this blessed period at the resurrection; or why does he refer, immediately after speaking of "the hope," to the scepticism of Agrippa as to the *possibility* of such an event?

Dr. Alford says, "The promise spoken of (ver. 6) is that of a Messiah and His kingdom, *involving the resurrection*." Very true. But *how* involving it? The difference between Paul and the Jews really consisted in this,—they (the Jews) looked for the kingdom in their own age, and apart from any special moral and spiritual preparation for it; Paul looked for it at the resurrection. If Dr. Alford admits this, he grants all we ask.

Except on the supposition that *the Jewish race* is, in some sense or other, to partake of the promise in the world to come, it is very difficult to see how "the twelve tribes," —the entire Jewish nation, those on earth and those in the invisible world,—can, even by a bold figure of speech, be spoken of as "instantly serving God, day and night, in hope" of its fulfilment (ver. 7). Nor is it easy to perceive, except on the hypothesis that "the resurrection" and "the kingdom" are synchronous, where "Moses and the prophets" predict a rising from the dead, since they do

so only inferentially, in proclaiming the advent of "the new heavens and the new earth," which are to follow as the consequence of the sufferings and death of Messiah (Isa. liii. 4—12, and lxv. 17—25). The most direct, perhaps the only *direct*, prediction of the resurrection of the Redeemer, in the Old Testament, is that which occurs in the 16th Psalm; but how dim that light must have been felt to be, is evident from the inability of the Apostles to comprehend the Lord, when He referred to the certainty of His own rising again. It is not till the Psalm is expounded by Peter, on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii.), that its meaning is made plain.

(xiii.) 1 Cor. xv. 25—"*For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet.*"

The reference here is, of course, to the mediatorial reign of Christ; for *as God*, the rule of the Redeemer can have neither commencement nor termination. What, then, can the words imply but that, before the mediatorial reign terminates, Satan will be thoroughly subdued? The reply of many, we are quite aware, will be that no one doubts this conclusion; that the prophets clearly predict such a triumph; and that the victory in question may be fairly anticipated in the millennium, when the spread of truth will be universal.

But how does this affect *the past?* Can it, we ask, be truthfully asserted that Christ has "put all enemies under His feet" (*lit.*, brought to nought, not hostile power only, but *all* power.—*Alford*) if His great enemy, Satan, has succeeded in ruining for ever the myriads who have lived in ignorance and sin *between* the creation and the millennium? We profess an utter inability to see how this *can* be. We are satisfied that Scripture teaches it never *will* be. Christ came to *destroy* the works of the devil, and that blessed result He will assuredly accomplish.

(xiv.) 1 Cor. xv. 50—"*Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.*"

A plain statement that "the kingdom" cannot be fully and properly inherited, until flesh and blood have been exchanged for the spiritual body. That this is the meaning of the Apostle is clear from what follows. He tells us that, although those who are alive when Christ returns "shall not all sleep" (*i. e.*, die), they must "*all be changed*,"—a process which will be accomplished "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump."

(xv.) 2 Thess. i. 5—"*That ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer.*"

Here, again, the question arises,—*When* was this kingdom of God, for which, or with a view to which, they were suffering, to be manifested? From the context, clearly at the second coming of Christ, which here also seems to be distinctly associated with the resurrection from the dead, and with the final "salvation (from sin) through sanctification and belief of the truth" (ver. 13). It is the time of retribution (ver. 6—9), and the reappearance of the Lord (ver. 10); the period of recompence and exaltation to the righteous, and of the consumption of "that wicked one, whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of His coming" (ii. 8); the day when the great impediment to the progress of the Gospel,—the permissive power of Satan to oppose Christ,—will be removed.

(xvi.) Heb. ii. 5—"*For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.*"

The first question suggested is,—What world? Owen and others, reading "age," reply, "the last and best dispensation," by which they mean the present one. Connecting the verse with the preceding ones, which speak of "a word (λογος) spoken by angels," they infer that the teaching of

the Apostle here is, that, under the Gospel, angels are not invested with the authority they exercised under the Law.

That this is true, as far as it goes, few will dispute; but it is far from being the whole truth. The contrast (ver. 5—8) is not between the Law and the Gospel, but between angels and men; between *angels*, as administrators of the old economy,* and *redeemed men*, who are to be, under Christ, the sole administrators of the new, both now and in the world or age to come; which world is but *the complement* of this, as the theatre of Christ's salvation.

Under the Law, angels were clearly employed as messengers of God's will, and in a certain sense, as *revealers* (Dan. viii. 16; ix. 21; Luke i. 19—26; Heb. ii. 2). Under the Gospel they have never been so employed. They are "ministering spirits," but not teachers or revealers. Hence, when Paul was to be converted by miracle, the Lord Himself meets him, and not an angel. Under the Gospel, angels are *never* spoken of as "co-workers with God and with Christ" in the salvation of men; *that* dignity is reserved for the redeemed.

But if the redeemed are thus to be employed in the world to come, the existence of beings who have to be taught and governed is necessarily supposed; and who are these so likely to be as persons whose probation in this world has been limited and incomplete?

(xvii.) Heb. ii. 6—8—"*We see not yet all things put under him.*"

That is, *under man*, for the quotation (6—8) is from the 8th Psalm, where the subjection of the world to man is plainly spoken of. "All exegesis," says Dean Alford, "which loses sight of this general import, and attempts to

* See Dan. x. 13—21; xii. 1; and Scripture generally for their agency as instruments of punishment or of deliverance under the new economy (Acts v. 19; Rev. ix. 11; xvi. 5, &c.)

force the Psalm into a direct and exclusive prophecy of the personal Messiah, goes to conceal its true prophetic sense, and to obscure the force and beauty of its reference to Him. It is MAN who in the Psalm is spoken of, in the common and most general sense. The care taken by God of *him*, the lordship given to *him*, the subjection of God's works to *him*;—this high dignity he lost, but it is regained for him by one of his own race,—the MAN Christ Jesus."

All this is plainly set forth in the text (9—11). It follows, then, that *one day* all things are to be put under the dominion of man, *i. e.*,—of Christ, as the head of redeemed humanity, and of His elect as His brethren (ver. 11). But how can this ever come to pass, if this world, till its termination, is to continue, more or less, under the bondage of the prince of darkness, and if, in the next world, the only living beings will be the redeemed (the elect kings and priests) and the hopelessly lost (wicked men and wicked spirits)? In such a state of things, who are "put under"? The only reply must be—animals, if they re-exist, and the wicked who are in "the lake of fire." But is it credible, we ask, that the *triumph* of Christ and of His redeemed Church will consist of nothing more than the trampling under foot, or rather the eternal contemplation of the hopeless misery, of the myriads of myriads who, since the creation, have lived and died ignorant and impenitent?

(xviii.) Heb. viii. 8—13—"*I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.*"

The entire passage from which these words are taken is a quotation from the prophet Jeremiah (xxxi. 31—34). It is repeated in the tenth chapter of the epistle (16, 17). The circumstances under which it was originally uttered are explained to us in the course of the prophecy. "After the sack of Jerusalem, Jeremiah, with the other captives, was brought in chains to Ramah, where Nebuchadnezzar had

his head-quarters. There it was, at God's special command, that he prophesied the future entire restoration of Israel, of a risen David (Jer. xxx. 9), and of the New Covenant, resting on absolute and veritable forgiveness of sins" (xxxi. 34).

Admitting, as we imagine most persons will do, that the prophet, as quoted by the Apostle, speaks of the covenant of which Christ is the Mediator, the question arises, "What does it involve?" Does it mean that *a day would come* when the men who were living in the time of Jeremiah would be forgiven?—that God would be merciful to *their* unrighteousness, and remember *their* iniquities no more (Heb. viii. 12, and x. 17)? *or*, is it merely intended to teach that, at some distant period,—more than 2,500 years after,—for that period has already passed since the words were uttered, God would be merciful to the unrighteousness of an Israel *then living* on the earth, but that all the countless generations between would be left, *as they have been*, in unbelief, and therefore irrecoverably lost?

No one pretends that a period has ever yet been seen when the Jews, no longer broken down or afflicted, could be spoken of as "forgiven," either in the sense of their sins being forgotten, or by their having nationally "looked unto Him whom they pierced." The prediction, therefore, remains yet to be accomplished.

On the supposition that it will be fulfilled in the race who may be living upon the earth in the times of the millennium, and in them alone,—generations past being all lost,—we can only say *such* a fulfilment is not like the dealings of Him who is both able and willing to do "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Ephes. iii. 20). On the supposition that it will be fulfilled in the resurrection, and embrace all who have ever lived, the grandeur of the promise is obvious; the joy of Paul at the thought that "all Israel shall be saved," explicable; and we exclaim, in

wonder and in love, "His ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts."

If the promise merely related to *national* blessing, it might indeed be supposed to find its fulfilment in the conversion of the Israel of the latter day; for nations, *as such*, having a corporate existence, may be rewarded or punished ages after the performance of the acts thus judged; but *here* it is individual men who are spoken of,—men whose *personal* sins are to be forgiven and forgotten,—sins committed during the time of their impenitence; persons who are to be brought under a dispensation in which it shall no more be said, "The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge,"—*a state of things inseparable from society, as it now exists;* but when, in distinction therefrom, every one shall "die for his own iniquity." The fact of further probation in a world (or age) to come, can scarcely be expressed in plainer terms.

Our limits do not admit of the subject under review being pursued further in the present paper. Enough has probably been said to excite inquiry, and to stimulate research. In our next, we propose to notice certain passages, chiefly in the Old Testament prophets, which still more decisively refer to the future of ISRAEL.

A.

THE MINISTER.

COUNT AGÉNOR DE GASPARIN AND DR. MERLE D'AUBIGNÉ.

Chapter IX.—The Reformation. (Scholasticism.)

THE great want—that for which men now sighed everywhere, was a spiritual religion,—a faith that was able to deliver from the bondage of rites and ceremonies which, although endured patiently enough during the long slumber of the nations, could not be borne after the popular mind had awoke from the sleep of ages, and the Spirit of Freedom, clapping her wings, and exulting in her liberty, had fairly gone abroad in the earth, conquering and to conquer.

In such a state of things, it was *essential* that the human mind should be brought into direct contact with God, if it was to find rest or peace. Luther felt this intensely, and it forced him to lay hold of the doctrine of Justification by Faith alone, with a grasp as firm and as eager as that with which a drowning man clasps the hand held out for his deliverance.

We err, however, greatly, if we imagine that this doctrine was then to Luther what it too often is now to us,—a mere theological dogma, to be carefully defined and eagerly disputed about. It was not *this* that moved the soul of the Reformer, as, climbing the *scala santa*, he stopped and fled, exclaiming, "The just shall live by faith." The words of the text were *to him*, not so much the declaration of a doctrine, as the expression of a new life,—of spiritual

freedom, of union to Christ, and of emancipation from the world, the flesh, and the devil.

But a time soon came when this great truth hardened into a dogma; for it was necessary not only to live by faith, but to *contend* for justification by it; to propagate the doctrine, and to hold it up for universal acceptance, in the face of bitter opposition and the most unscrupulous calumny. What, under such circumstances, could the Reformers do (at least so it seemed to them), but seize the weapons of their enemies, and with these borrowed arms try to defend their own camp? "The scholastic logic had been for six centuries previous the great instrument of training the human mind; and it was now no more possible to lay it aside, than to lay aside the use of language itself. The scholastic divinity had become a charmed circle, and no one could venture out of it, though he might oppose or respond within it."

In one important particular, it has been justly observed, "the scholastic and Protestant systems of Theology entirely differ; for the one begins to systematize from the human, and the other from the Divine side of Redemption; but the spirit is the same, the spirit which does not hesitate to break up the Divine Unity of the truth in Scripture, into its own logical shreds and patches. This spirit of ultra-definition, of essential rationalism, was the corrupting inheritance of the new from the old theology. The old mists, it is true, have never again so utterly obscured the truth, but their dimness, covering a fairer light, almost inspires the religious heart with a deeper sadness." *

Thus it was that, instead of a return to Scripture in its simplicity and purity, the Reformers took refuge in creeds

* "Leaders of the Reformation," by Principal Tulloch.

and confessions; superseded one theological system by another quite as absolute; one order of human authority by another order equally human and equally tyrannical. It was in this spirit that Calvin exclaimed, "He who makes himself master of the method which I have pursued, will surely understand *what he should seek for in Scripture.*"

The method in question has probably never been exhibited more clearly and concisely than in the unpretending little volume to which we have just referred. "The logical framework," it is truly said, "was, in all its well-ordered parts, *clothed* with the living garment of the Divine word; but in such a way that it is even now often difficult to disentangle the two. Calvin, for instance, with all the theologians of his century, and of the succeeding centuries as well, does not quote Scripture merely *in support* of his views, so that you can first see *his* view distinctly, and then the supposed scriptural warrant for it; but he everywhere *so blends* his own reasonings, and the statements of Scripture, that it is often very difficult to say where you have the human reasoner, and where the Divine teacher. He applies biblical language, moreover, as all his compeers did, with comparatively little regard to its historical connection, taking a statement at random from any book of the Old or of the New Testament, as bearing with equally conclusive force upon his argument. The result of this is, to exhibit the outline of his system as representing, in all its successive evolutions, a strikingly scriptural aspect." The same thing is true in relation to Arminianism, and to an equal extent.

How delusive, and yet how *natural* all this was, they only can understand who have reflected on the effects produced by centuries of traditional thought on religious subjects. Even in our own day, when so few seem able, on certain

subjects, to trust themselves simply with God's word, perhaps it is not too much to say that most men would still rather suffer any measure of bondage in the things of religion, than dwell in individual responsibility before God, for every action, thought, and affection.

But a question here may arise in some minds which cannot be overlooked. It is this:—How could a bondage like that which has just been described, ever be reconciled with that freedom of thought which it was the boast of the Reformers to have inaugurated?—how could submission to authority of this kind be made to accord with the admitted right of every man to study the Scriptures for himself, and to exercise private judgment in reference to its teachings?

We reply,—the harmonizing agency was supposed to be threefold,—first, *the pulpit*, by means of which religious thought was to be formed and guided; secondly, *the sacraments*, by exclusion from which Church order and authority were to be preserved; and thirdly, *the doctrine* of the illumination of the mind of every believer by the Holy Spirit, which it was always asserted could be obtained in answer to prayer. Every man, it was said, who humbly and prayerfully seeks light from Heaven, will find that light shining on the inspired page. Under this blessed influence, difficulties of interpretation will vanish; truth will reveal herself in all her simplicity; error will speedily disappear; and, inasmuch as it is one and the self-same Spirit that *dwelleth in the Church*, and that enlightens the individual believer, unity in all important matters will prevail among the true children of God; the teachers and the taught will mutually sustain each other; the law of the Church will be the law of love; and its decisions against

heresy will be enforced by a power, irresistible as that of Rome, but undeformed by cruelty or wrong.

Such was the theory. But events did not justify the expectations founded upon it. The anticipated unity soon proved to be a dream. Energetic and strong-willed men, differing widely in opinion, alike laid claim to the teaching of the Spirit, and *on that ground*, each in turn urged the impossibility of changing or modifying views, which were *to him* as inspirations from above.

When Luther and Melancthon took one side, and Carlstadt and Zuingle another, who was to judge between them? The Church? They and their followers constituted the only Church they could recognize; for both counted Rome as Antichrist, and neither would bow to the fathers, excepting in so far as the voice of the fathers seemed to them to coincide with the voice of the written Word. They *could* not do otherwise, while occupying the position they did: to have yielded their opinions to those of Cyprian, or Jerome, or Chrysostom, would have been to set up a tribunal fatal to their pretensions as Reformers.

What then remained? Truth compels the reply that nothing remained but separations, heart-burnings, alienations, bitterness, wrath, clamour—*these* were the fruits, the inevitable fruits of the views they had taken of the work of the Spirit. Personal influence alone gained the day. The weaker bowed before the stronger. Carlstadt became fanatical, was persecuted, and fled. Zuingle died early on the field of battle. Luther, with his lion-heart, broken though it was at last by dissensions and excesses beyond his control, in the main ruled over the storm. But the wound inflicted upon the Church by these divisions was never healed,—its scars remain to this day. The one wide

difference between the history of Christendom, as it was before, and as it has been since the Reformation, is this: "Henceforward it is impossible to follow its course *as a whole:* each country must have its own ecclesiastical as well as its own civil history;" * a history which, in some countries, as in England, must be again sub-divided into the history of the countless sects which everywhere perplex inquirers, and point the darts of infidelity: all alike constituted in forgetfulness of the fact, that the action of the Spirit of God on man, when not exercised miraculously, as at the planting of the Christian Church, and as in the case of the Apostles and inspired writers of Scripture, *is on the moral nature only*, and never directly on the intellect; that consequently, no one has a right to dogmatize on particular views; no one a right to separate from his brethren because others disagree with him; above all, that no one has a right to stereotype differences by forming sects for their support, and gathering around such communities those earth-born influences which spring from the possession of property, and the formation of what are technically termed "religious interests."

But we must reserve the further consideration of this subject for a third paper, which we shall entitle—SECTS.

E.

* Stanley's Introductory Lecture.

READINGS WITH A SCEPTIC.

§ 7, MATTHEW, Chap. iv. 1—11.

Place—The Arabian Desert. *Present*—Christ and Satan.

The Temptation of Jesus.

"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil," &c., &c.

SCEPTIC.—Allow me here to ask, Do you regard this portion of the narrative as literal fact, or as a myth? If the former, how do you expound it?

Believer. I certainly do not regard this narrative as in any sense mythical. In saying that I accept it as literal fact, some explanation may be necessary.

I do not see any reason to believe in a *visible* appearance of Satan to Christ. Still less do I imagine that Jesus was actually carried through the air, and placed, first, on the pinnacle of the Temple, then on a high mountain, and then brought back again to the wilderness. I regard the whole transaction as *purely spiritual;* but certainly not the less *real* for being so. It was, I think, an objective and historical transaction, yet belonging to the spiritual world; an actual exposure of the soul of Jesus to the direct influence of Satan,—intensely real, but not material or visible.

Further, it seems to me singularly appropriate. Jesus is about to enter on His ministry. His appointment has been certified, and His mission inaugurated, by a direct voice from heaven, addressed to Himself and His forerunner. He is now to be prepared for His work of love and suffering, by

the very same process which has been found needful in all ages to develop eminent goodness,—temptation,—mental and spiritual trial.

First, He withdraws, or rather *is led*, into solitude,—perfect solitude,* a condition essential to intense consciousness, the most trying condition in which humanity can be placed. Next, he remains in this solitude forty days, *fasting;* by which I understand taking no food whatever, the wants of the body being probably suspended under the influence of trance, or spiritual ecstacy. Passing out of this condition, he becomes subject to the cravings of hunger, and, amid the ebbings of animal life, experiences "those searching trains of thought that attend superior minds in seasons of extreme physical depression or exhaustion." Thus prepared, he enters upon that great struggle with evil, by which all minds, *morally great*, are disciplined for their work.

Suffering, as He now was, from abstinence, the tempter commences his work by proposing an unlawful way of deliverance, *the use of miraculous power for personal ends*, aggravating the seduction by suggesting that non-compliance would furnish good reason to doubt the fact of His being what He supposed Himself to be—THE SON OF GOD.†

* *Not* the thinly peopled country about Jerusalem, called "the wilderness," but probably the Arabian desert of Sinai. Mark says, He "was with the wild beasts." The narrative seems to imply that He was brought there by the will and power of His Heavenly Father. He did not *seek* the temptation. He has taught us to pray, "Lead us not into temptation," for we are but dust. At the same time, if brought into trial in the performance of duty, or under providential guidance, we must not shrink, remembering that "He who is for us is more than all they that be against us."

† There is a singular resemblance between this, which, for aught that

Foiled in the attempt to overcome the virtue of Jesus *through the appetites*, the agency through which by far the greater part of mankind fall, he turns to that which commonly prostrates those who overcome the animal,—SPIRITUAL PRIDE; and suggests an act of fanaticism, that so the peculiar favour with which God regarded Him might be made manifest, both to Himself and others,—"Cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning thee."

Again defeated, he offers one bait more, and that is certainly a splendid one,—UNIVERSAL SOVEREIGNTY, the world and everything therein, unlimited enjoyment, liberty *to will* regally, and power to execute without let or hindrance. What could humanity love better than this, or regard as of higher value? Christ gives the answer,—DUTY,—loyalty to the good.

Nor should it be unnoticed that Jesus always repels the adversary by a quotation from the only Scriptures then extant, those of the Old Testament; a proof that He had deeply studied them, that He was not only familiar with them, but accustomed to apply them practically in the support of His own virtue, and further, I think, a proof that He regarded them as authoritative and inspired. Any conclusion, therefore, that we come to, relative to the character of Christ, must more or less affect, and not slightly, the view we take of the Old Testament.

Satan departs, and angels, ministers of love and truth,

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appears to the contrary, was our Lord's *first* temptation, and that which was His *last*, viz., to deliver Himself from personal suffering by the use of miraculous power,—"legions of angels;" and it is curious to observe, that this temptation was aggravated by precisely the same reasoning,—"If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross."

comfort and strengthen Him,—not, I imagine, by any visible appearance, but by that mysterious agency which still unites the world of spirits to the world of sense.

Sc. I grant the beauty of all this,—it is a wonderful conception; but I do not see how such a transaction could in any sense be *real;* for, if Jesus was, as you assert, *absolutely pure and spotless*, temptation to evil would be impossible. Satan coming to the Son of God (if that title means anything), and offering Him universal empire on condition of allegiance, would, I should suppose, simply excite a smile, such as you or I would give were some poor idiot in the street to make us a similar offer. To call such a thing temptation would be purely absurd.

B. The difficulty you suggest is one that, I doubt not, has often pressed deeply and heavily upon inquiring minds. But allow me to say that it supposes two things, neither of which is true. First, it proceeds on the assumption that Christ was not properly man, but that His human nature was above and beyond that of proper humanity; and, secondly, it takes for granted, which again is not true, that pure and sinless beings cannot possibly be tempted to evil. Both these assumptions, I say, are incorrect.

The nature of Jesus, judging simply from the narrative we have been reading, was certainly different from yours or mine,—the miraculous conception supposes *that*,—but there is nothing to indicate that it was different from that of Adam before he fell. Both were pure and spotless. Yet what a difference! The first falls under what would seem to us a very slight temptation. The second endures to the uttermost, and comes off more than conqueror.

The truth probably is, that the highest and noblest natures are *more* tried by evil thoughts and suggestions

than inferior ones; that the more virtuous a man becomes, the more susceptible he is to the approaches of seduction; and that the amount of trial and suffering endured by any mind in its struggles with evil, will always be proportioned to its delicacy and susceptibility. It is not necessary *to love sin* in order to be sensible of its attractions, any more than it is necessary to *hate* duty before we feel an unwillingness to perform it. On the contrary, we may love duty, and yet at times feel a strange indisposition to follow it; and we may hate sin, and yet feel its seductions tugging at our souls. We may not be able to understand half the mysteries of our nature, and yet we may feel certain that no amount or severity of temptation is in itself of the nature of sin. On the contrary, when successfully resisted, it becomes the occasion of virtue; and it is only in the degree to which it is yielded to that it either debases the character or involves the slightest stain.

The reality of Christ's temptation, its severity, and its exhausting effects, are obviously supposed in the subsequent ministry of the angels. To deprive it of that character would be to strip it of all meaning, and to annihilate not only the narrative now under our notice, but the entire moral character of Christ himself. It may be very difficult for us to see *how* the temptations of Satan *took hold* on Jesus; but it is very plain that if they did not take hold at all, if they involved no struggle, the narrative is fabulous, and the whole history of Christ is reduced to a myth.

But do not mistake me. There are two ways in which temptation *takes hold* of mortals, viz., in the way of pleasure, and in that of pain. Many temptations to do wrong are even to the best of us more or less pleasant. Of how many may it truthfully be said,

"They like to slide, but do not wish to fall."

Nothing of this sort can be said of Christ. Temptation, though real, was to Him always painful and distressing. It is invariably so *to the good* in their best moments. I imagine that most men have, at one time or other, experienced temptations to evil which have simply distressed them. When, therefore, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, speaking of Christ, says, "He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin," I understand him to mean, as *we believers in Him* are; not tempted as *wicked* men are tempted,—by themselves,—by habits long indulged and unchecked,—by the pleasure that temptation brings with it,—but as good men in their best moments are tempted, when the approach of evil is painful to them, and the contest with it distressing.

I do not know how it may strike you, but to me it is utterly incredible that this narrative of the temptation, written with such inimitable simplicity and brevity, displaying such a profound knowledge of human nature, inculcating morality so pure and elevated, and distinguished by so Divine a subtlety in detecting evil in its most plausible forms, can have been the work of any impostor or the dream of any enthusiast; for these are not the men to teach the subjection of appetite, the sinfulness of spiritual pride, the evil of fanaticism, or the supremacy of duty. T.

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints—as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine.*

ISRAEL.

IN our last paper, two texts in the Acts of the Apostles (xxiii. 6; xxvi. 6—8) were, among others, brought forward to show that Paul associated the fulfilment of "the hope of Israel" with the Resurrection. We propose now very briefly to refer to some passages in the Prophets, which seem to support the conclusion that the two events are contemporaneous.

The first will be found in the twenty-fourth chapter of Isaiah (ver. 19—23), where we have a graphic de-

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scription of the judgments which are to precede the "reign" of the Lord of Hosts on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem (ver. 23), viz., the dissolving of the earth, and its removal, like a temporary lodging-house,—a fall from which it "shall not rise again"* (ver. 19, 20);—the punishment both of "high ones on high," and of the kings of the earth (Psa. lxxvi. 12), who are shut up "as prisoners in the pit"—the grave (ver. 21, 22);—the visitation of the prisoners "after many days," when "the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed," and the Lord shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously" (ver. 23). We are not now professing to expound the prophecy; we merely say, it *seems* to connect the reign of Christ with the termination of this dispensation. We are satisfied that the ordinary explanation, that which regards it simply as referring to the privileges of the Gospel, merely darkens counsel by words without knowledge.

In the two following chapters the reference to the Resurrection is explicit. Take, for instance, the twenty-fifth chapter (ver. 6—8), where the removal of "the vail that is spread over all nations" (ignorance and insensibility to truth) is said to take place at the time when God "will swallow up death in victory;" will "wipe away tears from all faces;" and take away "the rebuke of His people,"—a passage which is

* The opening of the windows of heaven, and the dissolving of the earth (ver. 18, 19), seem to point to a calamity as overwhelming as that of the deluge.

distinctly applied by the Apostle Paul to the resurrection, when he says to the Corinthians (1 Cor. xv. 54), "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written (viz., in this prophecy), Death (for the saint) is swallowed up in victory."

Further on (chap. xxvi. 19), the Prophet, still speaking of the same period, after referring to the many false expectations of the people, which had only issued in disappointment (ver. 18), says in plain terms, "Thy *dead men* shall live, *together with my dead body shall they arise.* Awake and *sing, ye that dwell in dust:* for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and *the earth shall cast out the dead.*"

We are quite aware that these words are usually interpreted figuratively, and are supposed merely to mean, that the same God who raises the dead will some day restore *moral life* to the Jewish nation. We search in vain for proof that such an interpretation is anything better than an idle conjecture. We think it far more reasonable and natural, having regard to what has just gone before, to interpret literally, for we firmly hold, with the judicious Hooker, that it is "a most infallible rule in expositions of sacred Scripture, that, where a literal construction will stand, the farthest from the letter is commonly the worst."

Lowth admits that this verse was one of those texts on which the ancient Jews grounded their belief of the resurrection, founded on the writings of the law and the prophets (Acts xxiv. 15); but how could they do this unless they understood it literally?

In the forty-fifth chapter, still speaking of the deliverance of Israel (ver. 17—23), God is represented as declaring this salvation of His ancient people to be the fulfilment of His own words, "Unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear,"—words which St. Paul, in the Romans (xiv. 11), quotes, and distinctly connects with the resurrection, viz., with the time when we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.

Nor does Isaiah stand alone in this matter. Jeremiah's prophecy (xxxi. 31—37) can scarcely be understood in any other sense; for the "new covenant" there spoken of, is made "with the *house* of Israel and with the *house* of Judah," and not with any remnant who may be living in the latter day. It is a covenant as general and as extensive as that "made with their fathers," when God brought them out of the land of Egypt (ver. 31, 32). And the covenant is that the law, instead of being inscribed on stones, shall be written on their hearts; that all of them shall know God, "from the least of them unto the greatest of them;" and that God in forgiving them "will *remember* their sin no more." It may, indeed, be said, as it often has been, that when the Apostle quotes this prophecy in the Epistle to the Hebrews (viii. 8—12), he does so to show that it is fulfilled in Christ. But this is not true, and can only be made to *seem* true by forgetting that the Epistle in question was written expressly to Jews, and that the covenant referred to, although *to be fulfilled* by Christ, is not yet made; for Israel is yet far enough from being in the blessed condition described

by the Prophet. That it will find its full accomplishment at the resurrection we cannot doubt.

Ezekiel, also, in his thirty-fourth chapter, describing the time when the Lord will make with His people "a covenant of peace;" when "evil beasts shall cease out of the land;" when they shall "sleep safely in the woods" (ver. 25); when "the earth shall yield her increase;" and when "none shall make them afraid" (ver. 27, 28), says,—Then shall "my servant David feed them," be "their shepherd," be "a prince among them" (ver. 23, 24),—prophecies which must certainly have seemed to the people to whom they were delivered to imply another dispensation; for David at this time had been numbered among the dead for upwards of 400 years.

The prophecy is repeated in the thirty-seventh chapter (ver. 22—28), where David, then slumbering in the grave, is again spoken of as "king over them," "their prince for ever," and this "when they shall be no more divided into two kingdoms" (ver. 22—25); but shall dwell "*in the land* wherein their fathers dwelt"—the land "given unto Jacob" (ver. 25). The interpreter who regards the "David" of this promise as Christ can scarcely fail of being open to the imputation of *reducing* the universal government of Messiah to that of a Jewish prince,—a dilemma from which he only escapes by understanding the Jews to be put for "the faithful in Christ, and by asserting that the territory there spoken of is no longer Canaan, but the whole earth," (so Fairbairn and others)—a method of inter-

pretation by which the Bible may certainly be made to mean anything the expositor desires.

Almost all commentators assert with the utmost coolness that in the Old Testament David is frequently put for Christ,—the fact being that this is *never* done. All the passages they quote in support of so strange a statement, obviously refer to David himself reigning, after the resurrection, over the Jewish people.

The vision of the dry bones in the thirty-seventh chapter next presents itself. The question put to the Prophet is, "Can these dry bones live?" He is instructed that *they can*, for the valley now stirs with new life; bones come together, "bone to his bone;" the "sinews and the flesh" gather around them; the "skin covers them above;" they live, and "stand up upon their feet an exceeding great army." These bones, the prophet is distinctly informed, are "*the whole house* of Israel;" and he is commanded to say to the people,—"Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, *I will open your graves*, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord" (Ezek. xxxvii. 1—14).

Now it is not denied that all the best and soundest evangelical commentators teach that the meaning of the

Prophet is, that in the latter days of this dispensation the Spirit of God shall give moral and spiritual life to dead sinners, and that certain generations of men, who may be living at some particular period, yet in the future, whether Jews or Gentiles, will be converted and saved. On this method of interpretation we only wish to say,—and we say it with all possible respect for our pious fathers,—that it is certainly not one which commends itself to common sense; unless, indeed, the Bible is to be interpreted on principles altogether different from those by which we seek to ascertain the meaning of any other book. It is impossible to see what comfort such a communication could afford to Jews living nearly six hundred years before the coming of Christ, or, indeed, *what relation* such a message could have either to them or to their circumstances. A Bible *thus* interpreted ceases to be a revelation; it is transformed into an enigma.

But if the vision was intended to teach that generation (as we believe it was), that, in spite of all apparent discouragement, the word and promise of God would be kept unbroken,—that the scenes then passing before the eyes of the Jewish people were not the termination of God's dealings with them,—that there would be a resurrection of the dead, and that *then* the promises made to Abraham should be perfectly fulfilled,—all is plain. Faith would hopefully look forward to the "continuing city," and trust would remain unshaken, however cloudy or dark might be the day of their trial.

Nor is this promise of restoration at the resurrection

confined to the Jew. Even "Sodom and her daughters," spoken of as less guilty than Jerusalem,* are to "return to their former estate"—whatever that may mean (Ezek. xvi. 55). And this, too, is to take place at the time when God shall establish with Israel "an everlasting covenant;" when she shall remember her ways and be ashamed; when Sodom shall be given her for a daughter, *but not by covenant;* and when the Lord shall be "pacified" towards her "for all that she hath done" (Ezek. xvi. 53—55, and 60—63).

Beyond accepting the general impression left by this difficult passage, that a time is to come when Sodom will hear the tidings of redeeming love, we do not venture to interpret. But it is impossible to avoid connecting it with the striking words of the Lord Jesus, recorded by Matthew:—"It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee (Capernaum); for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day" (Matt. xi. 23, 24).

Daniel, like the other prophets, clearly connects the deliverance of Israel with the resurrection; for he identifies it with the production of the "books," and with the time when "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt;" adding, "they that be wise" (then—at that time) "shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that

* See also Deut. xxxii. 32; Isa. i. 10; Lam. iv. 6.

turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. xii. 1—3); while Hosea represents God as exclaiming, by his mouth, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help. I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be had from mine eyes"—*i. e.*, the promise shall be made good (Hos. xiii. 9, 14).

That the hope of such a restoration, after the resurrection, is in harmony with the promises made to the Patriarchs, we have already intimated. The covenant with Abraham was clear and distinct,—that the land should be his (or, rather, that of his seed), "from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (Gen. xv. 18); but there is no reason whatever to suppose that, even in the days of Solomon, this was really the case; and still less can it be said that any portion thereof has been theirs "for an everlasting possession." Yet of both these things the covenant of circumcision was the appointed token and sign,—an assurance that all should literally come to pass (Gen. xvii. 1—10).

It was the recollection of this hope, and of the promise made to Abraham "that he should be *the heir of the world* (Rom. iv. 13), that sustained the Apostle Paul, when he reflected on the deplorable condition of his countrymen. It was the assurance that God had "not cast away his people," but that after "the fulness of the Gentiles" was come in "*all Israel should be saved*,"

that forced him to exclaim, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! (Rom. xi. 26 and 33.) And yet this salvation is not unconditional, without further probation, or without possibility of failure; for God will "graff them in again," only "*if they abide not in unbelief.*"

That some better and brighter expectation in relation to the spiritual condition and eternal destiny of the masses of mankind, than that which now prevails in the church, is needful for generations coming on, if they are to be preserved alike from "the inventions of purgatory" and the delusions of universalism, is but too clear to those who have "ears to hear" the cry of anguish which even now arises from innumerable hearts, subdued and softened by the loving tenderness of the Gospel, but unable to find peace of mind in regard to the present lot and future prospects of the human family. Such griefs can find little alleviation in any abstract reasonings either on the mercy of God, or on what *we* may conceive to be consistent with His justice. Peace, if it is to be had at all, can only be found in a calm and comprehensive examination *of the entire teaching of Scripture* in relation to the future. A.

THE MINISTER.

COUNT AGÉNOR DE GASPARIN AND DR. MERLE D'AUBIGNÉ.

Chapter X.—The Reformation. (Sects.)

IT is very difficult to dispute the force of M. Gasparin's quiet irony, when he says, "the Reformers *invented*" the modern minister of the Gospel,—"a priest, but without celibacy, and without specific sanctity; an elder, *plus* consecration, and the renouncing of secular employments;" for he certainly does not belong to the Apostolic era, nor to that of the Fathers, nor yet to Mediæval times. Whether invented or not, he is assuredly the *product* of the Reformation, and, as such, a standing evidence that,—whatever *ought* to have been the case,—in point of fact, no generation since the death of the Apostles has shrunk from modifying at will the arrangements of the first century, or even from putting them aside altogether, when they were found to stand in the way of that which was supposed to be, for the time at least, needful or expedient.

The great problem to be solved at the Reformation was, as we have already intimated,—How to reconcile the right of private judgment with the honour due to traditional thought, and the maintenance of Church order and authority? how to demand subscription or submission to a common confession, without stifling individual convictions? how to secure staunch adherents to the creed, without promoting either indifference or hypocrisy?

We have seen that this important end was sought to be

attained by the united power of the pulpit, of sacramental exclusion, and of supposed Divine teaching. These were to form the triple cord which, stronger than the triple crown, were to prove successful in restoring and securing a unity which the wickedness of Rome alone was said to have broken and overthrown. Fire and faggot, the dungeon and the stake, were to be disowned and abandoned; moral and spiritual influences were to take their place; and if a little gentle pressure was still found necessary to enforce uniformity, it was to be applied, not in the coarser forms of the thumb-screw and the boot, but in the more refined modes of social alienation and dislike, of Church excommunication, and of *charitable hate*.

The keystone of the whole structure was that form of sacramentarianism which held that admission to the Lord's Supper was the true symbol of discipleship, and that exclusion from it, when disciplinary, was all but equivalent to exclusion from the Church of the first-born. Courts of one kind or other, therefore, invariably stood sentry over "the table of the Lord;" and the minister, as the acknowledged head of the spiritual community, by and through these courts, ruled over the flock.

We are not now, of course, speaking of those national Churches in which conformity was enforced by law, and dissent punished as a crime,—but of communities in which, whether established or otherwise, freedom of conscience was at least recognized as the privilege of a Christian man. It was in *these* that the terrors of the pulpit, supported by the discipline of the Church, were brought to bear with all their force; and it was among these, where the sword of the magistrate could not be wielded, that "the iron" emphatically "entered into the soul."

But wherever dissentients multiplied, a door of escape was always open. *Individuals* might be crushed under the moral force wielded by an ecclesiastical court, and claims to Divine light, *on their part*, ridiculed as delusion, or condemned as presumptuous sin; but *bodies of men* could not be thus treated. Secession, and the consequent election of a new minister, the formation of a sect, the establishment of a discipline as intolerant and as exclusive as that of their antagonist—these things were always in the power of *a dissatisfied party;* and sanctioned, nay, supported as such movements were always supposed to be, by the Spirit of God, they were of course regarded by their promoters either as indispensable testimonies to some neglected truth, or proofs of unusual faithfulness to duty.

But the advantage thus gained was generally confined to the first seceders; for as in civil, so in religious matters, they who fled from tyranny commonly did so only to establish a greater tyranny of their own,—a tyranny which was the natural if not necessary fruit of the enthusiasm under which they acted, and without which, progress, in the first instance at least, would have been impossible.

We say, in the first instance, because, *at their rise*, sects always dwell chiefly on the points of difference which separate them from the body they have left. Proselytism, from its very nature, depends on the power of inflaming the imagination by excited statements as to the *vitality* of the points on which separation has been grounded. It was because the early separatists *felt* this, by a sort of instinct, although they were probably unconscious of the extent to which it influenced them, that they so greatly exaggerated distinctions which were *real* in their nature, but *false* in their degree. In their own estimation, *they* were "the

saints,"—the rest of mankind were reprobate. "The world" was not to them, what it was to Paul—simply that embodiment of evil which "loves its own," and hates Christ,—it was *everything that was not spiritual.* They could not believe that nature, and beauty, and innocent joy, were "of the Father." With them, whatsoever was not of *the Church*, was not of God. They seemed unable to comprehend how, in the ordinary sense of the words, God could truly be said to "love the world;" still less that, under any conditions whatever, *they* should love it. They forgot that the same Saviour who said, "He that is not with us is against us," said also, "He that is not against us is on our side." They, in fact, saw little or no difference between a hypocritical and persecuting Pharisee, an amiable moralist, and an unregenerated babe. All alike were, as they supposed, under "the wrath of God," and heirs of eternal misery.

It was to support these exaggerations, and to confirm this spiritual exclusiveness, that they instituted a discipline more rigid and severe than the world had ever before witnessed; and they could not perceive that its effect was to bind men to the sect, rather than to Christ; that it involved principles totally inconsistent with Christian liberty; that it was "a cage, against which a free spirit would only tear its breast and break its wings." If the Church discipline of which we speak *did not*, as a fact, generally operate in this way, it was only because the spirits it enclosed *were not free;* because those to whom it was applied had been formed and moulded under its influence; because all the ideas of right and wrong entertained by the flock, had been received from the sect; because habit, the power of association, social

influence, the public sentiment of the circle,—all combined to give it a strength that was irresistible.

And yet, after all, it was but a *negative* thing, for it could only keep out *certain forms* of evil; it could neither create nor sustain spiritual life. But its power for proselytism was great, since, like Rome itself, it proceeded on the firm belief that all who were *without* were exposed to eternal damnation; that the acceptance of certain doctrines was essential to Church membership, and admission within the Church essential to salvation. This was the fulcrum on which each party in turn planted its little lever, and thought it could move the world.

In many respects, things are now in a very different position, for we live in times when all old opinions are insensibly modifying; when sects are in their decline; when an anxiety to approximate to others, by dwelling on what is held in common, rather than to widen separation by magnifying differences, is the characteristic of parties; when truth, *as truth*, is little loved for its own sake; when religion is mainly objective, and life intensely outward; when men are impatient of everything that cannot be shown to be immediately and obviously useful.

Under such conditions, Church discipline becomes little better than a name; for he who is rejected from one circle easily finds admittance into another, and in the welcome he receives from his new associates, quickly forgets any pain he may have experienced in parting from the old. Ecclesiastical *machinery*, on the other hand, remains unchanged, and this amid anomalies the most extraordinary imaginable. Indifference reigns supreme. Parties *within* the Church may rise or fall; old sects *without* may decay, or new ones

spring into existence; the stately temple and Grecian portico may take the place of the lowly meeting-house; fashionable chapels of ease may throw into the shade the time-honoured parish church; the commercial principle, everywhere predominant, may force its way into the sanctuary, and men who would die rather than *consciously* make gain of their godliness, find themselves occupying the same position in the pulpit that lawyers do at the bar,—as dependent on their pew-rents as the physician on his fees. There is no remedy; *indifference reigns supreme.* Change is out of the question, for no one dreams of returning to primitive practices, or would listen for an instant to any man who should attempt to teach that the ministry (although always *called* a vocation) is not a profession; or that talent and eloquence, when supported by consistency of character, and employed for Christ, should not find in that channel their proper reward in money and social status.

Why, it is always asked, should not a given order of talent bring its secular reward in the ministry as well as in any other pursuit? Is this inconsistent with devotedness to God? Is it inconsistent with disinterestedness of motive? May not a man righteously claim this earthly reward, and yet feel that his sweetest and richest remuneration is the belief that he is serving his generation in a higher and nobler sense than he would do if he were merely following an ordinary worldly occupation?

Reasonings like these press with double force when it is recollected that, after making full allowance for exceptional cases, *no body of men* are so ill paid as the ministers of religion, and that no class, as a whole, is so benevolent and laborious. It is in vain to deny that, *things being as they are*, there is a great deal to be said for existing usages.

It is certain that the general sentiment of Christendom sustains the belief that clerical ambition, like other natural instincts, is unblameable, when not inordinate.

The result of the whole is that, as in the time of Luther, so at this day,—*Christian union is an impossibility;*—impossible, not because of those diversities of thought and feeling which are inseparable from the free exercise of human faculties, but because these diversities are stereotyped in creeds or articles; jealously watched over and protected by hierarchies, by synods, or by sects; always identified with worldly interests, such as power or patronage, money, status, or influence; and, in many cases, firmly bound up by law with endowments, or embodied in trust deeds.

So long as this state of things lasts,—and he must be a very far-seeing, or a very sanguine person, who can discern any symptoms of its termination,—the widest and noblest field that man can have for the exercise of that candour and charity which is so important a part of his moral discipline, will be practically closed; for search after truth is idle, where insuperable hindrances stand in the way of its reception; uniformity, on lesser and subsidiary points, will continue to be enforced, either by the penalties of Church discipline, or by the pressure of social dislike; the Holy Spirit will be claimed on all sides, as if He were a partisan; the essential and the unessential will be so confounded in religious strife, as to throw an element of doubt over both; and all hope of attaining to greater practical oneness of heart and soul, will be postponed to a period far too remote for human calculation.

For all this evil the Reformers are, no doubt, to some extent responsible. Had they been so far delivered from early influences and prejudices, as to have been able to

recover the Apostolic doctrine on the Spirit; had they borne in mind *the unquestionable fact* that, in every inspired epistle, stress is laid, not so much on accuracy of belief, as on conduct, character, temper, and tone of mind; had they seen, as they might have seen, that everywhere in the New Testament it seems to be taken for granted, that if the great *facts* of the Gospel are firmly retained, and its few leading principles *honestly* illustrated in a holy life, doctrinal errors will be few and unimportant; we say, had they been enabled to see and to feel these truths, *as there is reason to hope men are now beginning to see and feel them*, they would not have attached the importance they did to mere accuracy of sentiment on minor points; they would not have retained *so exclusively*, as the one sole medium for the sustentation of Christian life, a machinery which,—however valuable in its place,—is so liable to abuse as that of a clerical order; they would not have shrunk from emancipating religion altogether from the control of ecclesiastical courts; nor would they have so lightly abandoned other and lowlier agencies, which had been so greatly blessed of God in delivering the common people from the yoke of Rome.

Far be it from any of us to cast a stone at men "of whom the world was not worthy;" or to imagine for a moment, that in like circumstances we should have been wiser or better than they; but we should be unworthy of the truth they secured for us with their blood, if we did not earnestly protest against a tendency,—always active, because always sustained by prevailing indolence and timidity, and too often by worldly interests,—the tendency to subject the Word itself to their authority, and to suppose that, because they did so much, it is inexpedient for us to do more.

E.

READINGS WITH A SCEPTIC.

§ 8, MATTHEW, Chap. iv. 12—25.

Place, Galilee.

Preaching and Miracles of Jesus.

"Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison," &c., &c.

SCEPTIC.—I observe that we have here Matthew's earliest account of the public ministry of Christ; of the region through which He journeyed; of the doctrine He preached; of His influence over men's minds; and of the healing wonders which He wrought.

Two or three difficulties suggest themselves. First, Christ is now spoken of (ver. 17) as *beginning* to preach, an event which is connected with the supposed fulfilment of a prophecy in Isaiah; and yet it is quite plain, from other accounts, that He had been preaching before this in Judea. Again, is it not very strange that four men engaged in their lawful occupations should, at the bidding of a perfect stranger, abandon their little all to follow Him? Further, I do not quite perceive what is meant by "the Gospel of the kingdom" (ver. 23); nor can I at all understand the little impression apparently produced by what must have been, if the narrative be true, a *host* of miracles.

Believer. You are quite right in saying that Christ had preached in Judea before this journey into Galilee. It is plain enough that some considerable time *must* have elapsed between the temptation and the events which here immediately follow it, for St. John relates a number of incidents which took place during that interval. But the discrepancy

is easily accounted for. Matthew only professes to tell what he saw and heard. Now, as it appears further on, that he was employed at Capernaum (a town situated in the most populous part of Galilee) when he first became acquainted with our Lord, it is plain that he begins his narrative where his own experience began. The phrase, "began to preach" (ver. 17), must therefore be understood to refer to the commencement of His ministry *in Galilee.*

The passage from Isaiah is plainly a prophetic reference to the times of Messiah; and *its point* is to be found in the announcement that He was to be "for a light unto the Gentiles." The Evangelist, therefore, very naturally refers to the fact of Jesus having, at this early period, preached to Gentiles, and worked miracles in their favour, as a remarkable fulfilment of this ancient prediction.

You think it strange that four men should abandon their all at the bidding of a perfect stranger. Where, let me ask in turn, is the evidence that Christ *was* a perfect stranger to them? St. John tells us that, during the interval of time to which we have already referred,—the period omitted by Matthew because not coming under his own cognizance,—Andrew and Simon Peter had become followers of Christ, in consequence of John the Baptist having pointed Him out as "the Lamb of God;" and it is more than probable that the others were equally prepared to recognize Jesus as the Messiah. Again, there is not the slightest reason to suppose that the men either threw away their property, or renounced their occupation, to follow Christ. That they instantly left their fishing, in obedience to the call to higher and nobler work, is certain; but there is every reason to suppose that they more than once returned to it, under the Divine sanction (see John xxi.). The readiness with which

they submitted to the call of Jesus certainly indicates that He possessed a power over the minds of men, which can only be explained on the supposition that the garb and voice of the son of the carpenter must have but partially veiled a superiority, which had only to put forth its claim to obedience in order to have it instantly recognized.

By "the Gospel of the kingdom" is, I think, *here* clearly meant John the Baptist's Gospel,—"the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The preaching of Jesus, at this time, appears to have been simply a continuation of that of John. It was the prolongation of that call to repentance and reformation of manners, as the needful preparation for the reception of Messiah, which had been the burden of John's ministry.

The apparently small impression made by what you very fairly term "a host of miracles," is, I think, an evidence in favour of the truthfulness of the narrative. The effect is precisely that which would be produced by *a series* of miraculous cures, rapidly following each other, or simultaneously wrought on a multitude of persons,—a forgetfulness of the agency in an eager desire to experience the benefit.

In one sense, however, the impression is not small. The fame of Messiah spreads; multitudes crowd around Him; sick persons come from all quarters; He is universally acknowledged to be a great prophet. But beyond this, no great noise appears to have been either made or desired. Notoriety is always represented as offensive to Christ, always regarded as unfavourable to the great object of His mission; a view of things involving *depths* of wisdom, and a delicacy utterly beyond the comprehension of ordinary minds.

Sc. I grant that; and if I could believe in a miracle at all, I should not dispute those of the New Testament.

B. But why should you not believe in a miracle? You will not deny that He who ordained the laws of nature can, if He think fit, at any time suspend them; or perhaps, I should rather say, supersede them by the revelation of a higher law. There is nothing unreasonable in the supposition that He *would* do so, in order to clothe with adequate authority a mission so important as that of Christ. The rest is a simple question of testimony.

Into the value of that testimony it is impossible for us now to enter. I will only say that if number, variety, and worthiness in end and purpose; if instantaneous performance, publicity, and crowds of witnesses; if perfect independence of second causes, subjection to the examination both of friends and enemies, and direct appeal to the ordinary senses of mankind, be required as evidence of the performance of miracles,—all these are furnished: and if varied but united testimony, sustained from age to age by public observances instituted at the time of the occurrence of the events, and continued without interruption ever since, be demanded as security against imposition on the credulity of after times, these, too, are at every man's hand, to support the miracles of the New Testament. What more ought a reasonable man to require?

Sc. Without answering that question, I should rather say, Why discuss this miraculous element at all? Why not accept the New Testament as *a good book*, "profitable," if you like, "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness," without bewildering our minds about the points in which it has been generally supposed to differ from other books? Why cling to the notion of Divine inspiration in a sense which implies the *infallibility* of the writers? Why not be content to regard the book

as "Divinely animated," yet not essentially differing from other writings, alike excellent in purpose and character?

Such a view of Scripture would, I think, comprehend all that is needful, since it would suppose purity of intention on the part of the Evangelists, and a true representation of facts, *as they conceived of them.* It certainly clears away much that is embarrassing, without at all dishonouring either Christ or His Apostles. It enables us to make liberal allowance for human infirmity, for unintentional error, and for popular prejudices, without at all calling in question the integrity of any one; since the words of the Bible are recognized as *true* words, and surely not the less true because expressing "the conceptions of the times, and the measure of knowledge or of faith to which every one of the writers, in his degree, had attained."

B. My objection to the method you propose is, I think, a very rational one. It makes the Bible an entirely different book from what it professes to be. It altogether destroys its *authoritative* character; and, in my opinion, in doing this, annihilates its moral character also. For, first, if the miracles it records did not take place, the narrators, professing to be eye-witnesses, were certainly either deceivers or deceived; *in either case*, quite unworthy of respect.

Secondly, no error can be greater than to say that the words of Christ and His Apostles were *true words*, if they were not inspired in a much higher and very different sense from ordinary human utterances; since the speakers always *assume* this to be the case, and perpetually put forth claims which, if groundless, are either wicked or absurd. Call such writings fanatical words, if you will; weak or blasphemous assumptions, if you must; but *true words* they can never be.

The real question at issue is, not *how* God inspires the Evangelist to narrate, or the Apostle to write; but whether He does or does not *so teach* the one and the other, that both become invested with a Divine character, and *infallibly* express Divine thoughts and feelings? I fully agree with you, that pretensions such as these are not to be admitted without good reason and adequate evidence; and I cannot but hope that, when you have dwelt for some time in the moral atmosphere of the Book, and become conscious of its intense purity, its wonderful elevation of thought and feeling, its high humility, and its comprehensive charity, you will perceive it to be radiant with a glory, in the light of which discrepancies will appear but as motes in the sunbeam.

Believe me, nothing *can* be more unreasonable than to regard the Book as being at once true, and yet full of falsehood; pure, and yet defiled by error and prejudice; "Divinely animated," and yet disgraced by fanatical assumption. As if a thing, really of the heaven and heavenly, could be tainted by the breath of delusion and deceit. Eject the miraculous from the New Testament, and the Book unquestionably falls into contempt. If it be not authoritative and Divine, it is clearly not worth the trouble of perusing; except, indeed, as a literary miracle, a monster of good and evil, which, having first slain the falsehoods of Paganism, now waits, in turn, to be devoured by higher truth, to which it has itself given birth and development.

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The Interpreter.

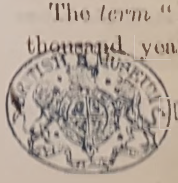
"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints—as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine*.

MILLENNIUM.

WE propose in this paper to inquire into the testimony of Scripture relative to what is usually termed "The Millennium." We shall endeavour to pursue the investigation without reference to any particular scheme of unfulfilled prophecy, and simply with the view of ascertaining what the precise teaching of Scripture on this subject really is.

The *term* "Millennium," or rather its equivalent, "a thousand years," occurs only in one chapter of the



[Registered for transmission abroad.]

Bible (Rev. xx. 1—8). Whether it is there to be understood literally, or to be regarded as put for a long but indefinite period, is uncertain.

In order to understand its true bearing, it is necessary that the *connection* in which it appears should be carefully noticed.

The *seventeenth* chapter of the book in which it stands furnishes a plain, though symbolic account, of the destruction of an anti-Christian power called "the great whore that sitteth upon many waters" (xvii. 1), a term which is subsequently explained to mean, "that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth."

The *agents* of destruction are, in this instance, ten "horns" (symbolic powers), which have long carried (or sustained) "the adulterous city." These horns are explained to be "ten kings" (or rather governments), which receive *power as kings* one hour,* with a federal

* It should be noted that the "ten kings" are not actual monarchs at the time here referred to; on the contrary, they "have received no kingdom as yet" (xvii. 12). Further, these ten horns, or powers, must not be confounded with the ten horns mentioned earlier in the prophecy (chap. xiii. 1), which interpreters generally suppose to stand for the barbarous kingdoms of which the Papal empire was originally composed. *Here* the ten horns probably represent *democracies*, for they only receive power *as kings* "one hour" (*i.e.*, for a short period), which power they *give to* a central head, or mystic beast (xiii. 11 and xvii. 11, 12). The number ten is, probably, in both cases symbolical. There is an evident reference to Daniel (vii. 24), where ten kings are mentioned who were to oppress the Jews. So here, this persecuting power consists of *united* kingdoms, whether more or less than ten is unimportant. It is to be regretted, therefore, that any list of them should have been attempted.

head, called symbolically, a "beast" (ver. 12). These are the declared enemies of Christ (ver. 14), and *become* the enemies of "the whore." They "make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire" (ver. 16). They all act under "the beast"—*whatever that term may mean*—for they "give their power and strength unto him" (ver. 13).

The *eighteenth* chapter describes the destruction of a "great city," apparently the same "city" mentioned as the "great whore," but now called (in consequence of some important change brought about by the fall of the adulteress), "Babylon the Great" (ver. 2). The destruction in this case is not, as in the preceding instance, effected by another and a younger power, or form of evil, but immediately from heaven. The imagery would lead to the supposition that volcanic agency is employed (ver. 18):—"Her plagues come in one day" (ver. 8), nay, "in one hour is she made desolate" (ver. 19). She falls "like a great millstone" into "the sea," and is "found no more at all" (ver. 21).*

* These two events,—the spoiling of the "great whore," and the destruction of "Babylon the Great," are not to be regarded as synchronous. They do not occur at the same time; nor do they *immediately* follow one another. The first (the "great whore") seems to be ruined *before* the advent of the second—the mystic beast (xiii. 10), which only revives its "image"—probably its æsthetic character and priestly organization (ver. 15), and then persecutes to the death (xiii. 16 to xiv. 5). It is *as the seat of this last form of antichrist* that Rome (if she be the city intended) is called "Babylon the Great," and as such is destroyed by volcanic agency (xvii.). Yet the two are mysteriously connected; for it is not until Babylon the Great is destroyed (which involves the destruction also of the "image" of the "great whore") that

The *nineteenth* chapter opens with joy in heaven on account of the judgment of the "great whore" which did "corrupt the earth," and the avenging of the blood of the saints (xix. 1—6). After this, "the marriage of the Lamb" takes place. Heaven opens, and one appears who is named "the Word of God," the "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (ver. 13 and 16), before whom perishes the "beast," the "false prophet," the "kings of the earth," and "the remnant" (or rest) of mankind (ver. 21)—"all men," in short, "both free and bond, both small and great" (ver. 18).

For anything that appears to the contrary, the earth is now empty. All its inhabitants, without exception, would seem to have been swept into Hades, or "changed" (1 Cor. xv. 51), and the world experiences that deluge of fire of which St. Peter speaks in connection with "the day of the Lord"—the "day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Pet. iii. 7—13).

And now comes what is termed THE MILLENNIUM. The *twentieth* chapter, after announcing the binding of Satan for "a thousand years" (xx. 1—3), introduces to us "thrones," and persons sitting upon them, to whom "judgment is given" (1 Cor. vi. 2); and soon afterwards, "the souls* of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God, and which

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she herself is said to be finally judged, and the blood of God's servants avenged (xix. 2).

* "Souls returned to that living union of body and soul which constitutes our present *life;* and will again constitute our resurrection state."—*Archdeacon Hoare.*

had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands," are seen, and they "live and reign with Christ a thousand years" (ver. 4).

This, we are distinctly told, is "the first Resurrection" (ver. 5). The Millennium and the first Resurrection are therefore clearly identical.*

But what, we must now ask, is this phrase, "the first Resurrection," intended to imply? Is it to be regarded as meaning only the resurrection of those "martyrs" of the last persecution, who are now admitted to the high dignity of reigning with Christ? Or, is the phrase to be extended so as to include *all* the "dead in Christ" (1 Thess. iv. 16; 1 Cor. xv. 23, 24)? As St. Paul plainly teaches the latter, the question must be regarded as decided by him; for a plain, didactic composition may always be used to expound that which is symbolic, where the object of the writers is the same, and their *authority* equal. The probability is that the martyrs of the last percution only are *named*, because this particular prophecy relates only to them.

The "dead in Christ," then, being all "raised," and the living "changed," the "rest of the dead," we are

* By what strange process "the Millennium," as revealed in Scripture, can ever have come to be identified, as it has, with the universal spread of the Gospel under this dispensation (whether such an expectation be well founded or not), it is impossible to imagine. In the Bible there is not a shadow of excuse to be found for thus appropriating it. Is it *hopeless* to expect that the Bible should be read like any other book, by the light of context and common sense?

told, "lived not again until the thousand years were finished" (xx. 5).

Who, then, are meant by "*the rest* of the dead"? The word translated "rest" (οι λοιποι) is the same word which, a little before, is translated "the remnant" (xix. 21), and may, therefore, fairly be regarded as intended to indicate, in each place, the same *class* of persons, viz., in the one case (chap. xix. 21), the men who were slain "with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse,"—the worshippers and partisans of the beast; and, in the other (chap. xx. 5), all, in every age, who have lived and died deliberate rejectors of Christ and persecutors of His Church. *These* live not (on earth) during "the (mystic) thousand years."

But what has become of the men,—a *great multitude*, without doubt,—who, though cut off (ver. 18), had been spectators rather than participators in the contest described; not persecutors, yet not believers?

Where too, on the supposition that the Church is now with Christ, and its active enemies, like Satan, bound and reserved for judgment, are the countless generations of mankind, that have trod the earth's surface since Adam's fall? Where the antediluvians to whom, as some suppose, Christ himself "went and preached" (1 Pet. iii. 19)? Where the multitudes of Israelites, numerous as the stars of heaven, or as the sands of the everlasting sea, to whom such great and glorious promises were made, but who never witnessed their fulfilment upon earth? Where the myriads on myriads of heathen who have lived and died without

ever hearing the glad tidings of redeeming love?—*not guiltless*, for from the things that were seen they might have discerned, to some extent at least, the eternal power and godhead of the Creator,—yet not guilty in any sense corresponding to the guilt of those who have deliberately rejected a Saviour? *Where* the innumerable host that have passed away in infancy? *Where* the hundred millions (literally so) of beings for whom Christ died, yet who on earth, owing to a defective physical formation, never could distinguish right from wrong? Where the *all*, of every age, who, in the twilight, or in the darkness of their souls, have died trusting in Christ?—not conquerors, yet not devils; not regenerate, yet not reprobate; sinners and sufferers through the temptations of Satan, but not his conscious agents; not resisters of evil, as they ought to have been, yet not fairly to be classed with those who love and choose iniquity? Where, we say, are *these?* The text is silent. What can we do, then, but conclude from the general teaching of Scripture, regarding the world or age to come, if we have gathered it aright, that Satan being now "bound," and that "wicked one" destroyed (2 Thess. ii. 8), and all *opposing* power removed, *the race of man*, under the teaching and government of those who now reign as kings and priests unto God, is hopefully advancing in the knowledge of the truth, and being gradually brought into subjection to the Redeemer? A.

RELIGIOUS TRACTS.

PERVERTED TEXTS.

FEW persons are probably aware to what an extent the giving of "false reasons for right conclusions," and "false grounds for right beliefs," is practised in the production of what are popularly termed Religious Tracts. We have one now before us,—a narrative, well known and very largely circulated,—which strikingly illustrates the evil in question.

The story is simple, being in fact little more than the details of a conversation supposed to have taken place between a traveller and a poor woman. In the course of this conversation, the appeal, so often made to sinners, is urged upon her,—"Prepare to meet thy God;"—by which phrase she is of course led to suppose that the prophet, under the influence of Divine inspiration, calls upon all men to prepare for death and judgment.

Now this is a perversion which nothing can justify; for on turning to the passage of Scripture in which the words occur (Amos iv. 12), we find that the sacred writer is not referring to death at all, but to the temporal judgments which God had inflicted, and threatens still to inflict, on the rebellious Israelites. The passage that *ought* to have been quoted for the purpose of the writer is Acts xvii. 31.

But to proceed. The poor woman addressed, being thus warned to prepare for judgment, is now supposed to plead that she has always been honest and industrious, and that she has had a great deal of affliction. To all this, *as mere morality*, no importance whatever seems to be attached,

under the mistaken notion that habits of industry, and other similar virtues, are likely to be regarded as meritorious, and so tend to indispose the soul towards a simple reliance on Christ. For the same reason, the afflictions of this poor person, instead of being regarded as the loving discipline of a Heavenly Father, intended to lead His erring child nearer to Himself, only afford reason for additional warning against self-righteousness.

The woman freely admits her sinfulness, but clings to the thought that God is very merciful;—pleads that she has not been immoral, and claims at least the credit of having, amid many sorrows, worked hard for her family, and paid every one their own.

The reply made is a striking one. "You admit, it is said, that you *have sinned;* then you have incurred the condemnation of God's law, which declares that 'the soul that sinneth it shall die.' God has said so by the mouth of the prophet Ezekiel (xviii. 4). As a sinner, therefore, you are justly exposed to eternal misery."

We turn to the chapter and verse thus given, and are somewhat shocked to find that the passage in question has really nothing whatever to do with the law under which we live, but that it refers entirely to the Jewish theocracy; for it describes the sort of sinner who shall die,—temporal and not eternal death being the punishment threatened. It is the man who has "eaten upon the mountains, oppressed the poor, spoiled by violence, not restored the pledge, lifted up his eyes to idols, or taken interest for money lent." This is the man *who shall not live.* Again, the prophet tells us *who* shall be spared. It is he who has done that which is lawful and right, has not worshipped idols, or been an oppressor, or hard-hearted to the poor, or taken interest

for money lent. He, says the prophet emphatically, "*shall surely live.*"

Now, if the text, as quoted, has any bearing at all upon the poor woman in question, it is one distinctly the reverse of that which is intended by the tract-writer; for, not having committed the particular sins enumerated, she might fairly take the comfort it affords, and be assured that she shall live. But all this is concealed in the tract, for the prophet is quoted *there* as if he had said, whoever violates God's law *in any way*, shall surely die eternally; the *true* meaning and teaching of the text being that, in punishing the Israelites, God would not leave room for them to say that they died for their fathers' sins, but that every man should be held responsible only for his own.

The woman now pleads that she has not been *so great* a sinner as some. Again her mouth is closed by the solemn declaration of the apostle James (ii. 10), "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all,"—a text which she is assured teaches, on the authority of God himself, that if she has sinned "*only once*," she has "as effectually forfeited the favour of God," as if her life "had been one continued act of rebellion against Him."

We say nothing about the folly of putting Divine truth before the poor in this extravagant way,—perhaps we ought rather to say, *in this forensic mode*,—for the truth involved is, as a legal argument, not to be disputed. But we turn again to our Bibles, and there we find that the apostle really says, that if a man profess to obey the royal law,—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,"—and yet flatter the rich and despise the poor, he is a breaker of that law; since, offending it in that one point, he breaks *in principle* the whole law of love to his neighbour: for, adds the apostle,

"He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill;" the man, therefore, is a transgressor who violates either injunction. How strange that this very text, given of God to rebuke the rich for despising the poor, should be seized upon *by the rich* to alarm the poor.

True enough, *the intent* is good, and the motive kind and benevolent, for the only object is to lead the sinner to Christ. But the means is not justifiable, since it is giving a false ground for a right conclusion.

Still the woman is not convinced of sin, so a fresh shaft is supposed to be drawn from the Divine quiver. The woman admits that on Sunday morning she "cleans up the house, bakes some barley-bread for her children, and then sits and talks with her husband, while he smokes his pipe;" her heart, no doubt, beating with joy to see him so happy, sober, and domestic.

To do the tract-writer justice, he seems to feel that there is something sacred about this sight, so he begins,—"Now you must not be hurt at anything I say. I do not mean to offend you; but if this is the way in which you spend your sabbaths, you are living in open violation of God's law, and you insult every sabbath day your best friend, your Heavenly Father. It is recorded in the Book of Numbers that a man was stoned to death by the command of God himself for gathering sticks on that day (Numbers xv. 32—36). Do you not think that *your* sin is as great as his?"

The poor woman is made to reply, "with evident emotion, Yes!" And now the preliminary work of conviction is accomplished,—the Gospel is preached to her,—her feelings are excited,—a great deal of excellent advice is given,—and the end, as usual, is, that through all the rest of her life

blessings are poured on the head of the good gentleman, who had bestowed upon her so great a treasure.

Now, since everybody is aware that in the dwellings of the best Christians in the land, housework, more or less, is always done on Sunday; and since those who read their Bibles *ought* to know that the text in question is altogether inapplicable to the Lord's day, and under the Jewish law to be viewed only in the light of rebellion,—it is monstrous to attempt, by such means, to convince people of sins, which, viewed in the light of the Christian dispensation, are no sins at all.

The tract closes with an exhortation to all to remember that "he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins" (Jas. v. 20), a passage which, from the context, probably refers only to temporal death, as inflicted *judicially* for sin, during the planting of the Christian faith by the apostles.

We often boast of the advance we are making in biblical criticism and exegesis; but what is it worth, if we are to go on misreading our Bibles in this way? if the results of criticism are to be confined to the closets of students, and popular theology still to be deformed by misrepresentations and exaggerations like those we have referred to.

We have avoided naming the tract which has called forth these remarks, because it is by no means an exceptional one. A very large proportion of modern religious writing, and a great deal of preaching, too, is characterized by similar perversions of Scripture, and equally open to the charge of participating in something like pious fraud.

Never should it be forgotten, that nothing can justify our countenancing anything that is erroneous, however seemingly beneficial may be its results. "The temptation to

depart from this principle is sometimes excessively strong, because it must often be the case, that men will be in some danger, in parting with a long admitted error, of abandoning at the same time *some truth* they have been accustomed to connect with it. In such cases it requires a thorough love of truth, and a firm reliance on Divine support, to adhere steadily to the straight course. This straightforward course may not, indeed, obtain 'the praise of men.' Courage, liberality, activity, and other good qualities, are often highly prized by those who do not possess them in any great degree; but the zealous, thorough-going love of truth is not very much admired, or liked, or indeed understood, except by those who possess it. But truth, as Bacon says, 'only doth judge itself,' and 'howsoever these things are in men's depraved judgments and affections, it teacheth that the inquiry of truth, which is the love-making or wooing of it,—the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it,—and the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it,—is the sovereign good of human nature.'"* D.

* Archbishop Whately's "Notes on Bacon's Essays."

"It may be asked,—'Are we not at liberty to take striking passages of Scripture, and apply them to new and important purposes, upon a principle of accommodation?' Permit me to answer this question by asking another. Are we at liberty to put any meaning upon the Word of God, different from *its own* proper, designed, and genuine sense, as ascertained by competent investigation?"

Principles of Interpretation, by John Pye Smith, D.D. 1831.

FORMS OF THOUGHT.

THE HIGH CHURCHMAN.

SINCE the Reformation *two great forms of religious thought* have, in the main, divided the Protestant Churches. Perhaps the opinions they respectively indicate cannot be better expressed than in the terms by which they are popularly known,—High and Low Church. Under the first designation we may rank nearly all Lutherans, and most Anglicans. Under the second, the evangelical section in the Church of England, Presbyterians generally, whether found on the continent of Europe, in Scotland, or in America,—and emphatically the Nonconformists of Britain, with their co-religionists on the other side of the Atlantic.

The HIGH CHURCHMAN is one who holds that the Church of Christ consists of all baptized persons, whatever may be the degree of their spiritual attainments; however faint and feeble the pulsation of their souls; however inconsistent, in many respects, their outward conversation. *All these*, so long as they do not openly apostatize, or live in flagrant defiance of the Divine law, he regards as redeemed persons,—potentially, if not actually, "saints,"—children of God, and *in* Christ; many of them, indeed, living far below their privileges, and needing, most obviously, the renewing influence of the Holy Spirit, yet still to be dealt with as members of the family, and not to be regarded in any other character than that of imperfect Christians.

This view of the Church, and of what constitutes a Christian, lies at the base of the High Churchman's

theory, and modifies, if it does not create and control, his entire interpretation of Holy Writ.

He is not unconscious that this mode of looking at Divine truth and its work in the world, has both its difficulties and its dangers. He admits the reality and necessity of Church discipline in the case of open and scandalous offenders; but holds that the Apostles and their immediate successors never separated professedly Christian men from their brethren, or denied them any Church ordinance, so long as the great facts on which the Gospel rests were honestly believed, and open scandalous immorality avoided. And he supports this conclusion by the argument that, under the Jewish dispensation, although the same spiritual distinctions which now prevail existed; although many who were called Israel, were not really "of Israel," circumcision being of the Spirit and not of the letter, yet no outward sign separated the one from the other,—God only judging the heart: that our Lord, in the parables of the tares and the wheat, of the good and bad fish, and in other places, teaches the necessity of submitting, under the present dispensation, to evil admixtures; and that all experience has hitherto shown, that attempts to purify by exclusion fail to accomplish their end, inasmuch as they do not represent facts,—hypocrites finding entrance, and the timid and lowly being often shut out.

On this ground, the impossibility of obtaining a pure communion on earth, and the undesirableness of attempting it beyond a limited extent, he thinks he plants his foot confidently and securely. He would not, like Xavier and the Romanists, collect crowds of heathen by a bell, and baptize them with a brush; but he would not withhold the rite from any child, heathen or nominally Christian, where

a pledge could be obtained from sponsors that such child should be brought up in the Christian faith. In a certain sense, he throws open the table of the Lord to all comers, but he solemnly warns the unworthy not to approach, "lest, after the taking of that Holy Sacrament," the devil bring them "to destruction both of body and soul."

The High Churchman further assumes, as he supposes on scriptural authority, that Christ originally committed the guidance and governance of His Church, not to the Apostles only, but by and through them, to a succession of men,—a succession stretching through all ages,—who were to be officially separated from others for the work of the priesthood, and by whom, in subjection one to another, according to an appointed order, believers in all parts of the world were to be, through all time, taught, disciplined, and sustained. That in harmony with this idea, the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper were instituted; the first, to regenerate the nature of the newly-born child, preparing the soil, as it were, for the reception in future years of the good seed of the Word. The second, to renew, day by day, the worthy partaker thereof with spiritual life and strength in Christ Jesus; but both deriving their efficacy from administration according to the appointed order.

He further holds, that to this Church God gives His Holy Spirit, to each member according to the measure of the gift of Christ. To the priest in large measure, qualifying him *generally* for the work to which he is dedicated by the imposition of hands of the bishop, and enabling him *in particular*, to impart, through prayers, and by virtue of his office, sacramental efficacy,—not, indeed, to baptism by water, for *that* it is supposed may, under given circumstances, accompany aspersion either by a layman or

a woman,—but to the bread and wine, by and through which, as mystical portions of the body and blood of Christ, the worthy recipient is spiritually blessed; while to each individual member of the Church is given the same Spirit, according to his diligence in improving the various appointed means of grace, especially that of the Holy Communion, which is *to him* the channel through which mainly flows those influences which enlighten the mind and purify the heart.

From these views, if true,—a question on which it is not necessary here to give an opinion,—it follows that *the doctrine of the Incarnation* is the central point of Christianity; and union with Christ, by and through His body—His flesh and His blood, the chief, if not the sole, source of spiritual life and strength.

Nor does the entire sacred narrative fail to take a colour from the same source. The "holy child Jesus," *as a child*, comes to be regarded as a proper object of worship; and all through the Divine history, *the outward*,—the nativity, the circumcision, the crown of thorns, the stripes, the wounds, everything, in short, which pertains to *the body* of the Redeemer becomes not only a sacred mystery, which it is to all, but emphatically the highest subject of devout contemplation, and the most efficient means of spiritual growth.

That the general outline of this theory is sustained by the traditions of the fourth and subsequent centuries cannot be doubted. Explain it as we may, the fact remains that when, after a century and a half of obscurity, the Church once more emerges into daylight, and becomes, not so much the subject of controversy and conjecture as of actual history, —the history of a society,—its distinctive features are unquestionably different from those of the apostolic era, and as unquestionably those of the High Churchman. E.

READINGS WITH A SCEPTIC.

§ 9, MATTHEW, Chap. v. 1—16.

Place, Galilee. *Present*, The Disciples.

The Sermon on the Mount.

"And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain," &c., &c.

SCEPTIC.—Do you regard this discourse* simply as *Jewish* teaching, or do you consider it as an embodiment of new doctrine? In either case, I do not quite see why poor-spiritedness should be accounted a virtue; nor do I perceive in what sense the meek, *as a fact*, inherit the earth. It seems to me that this class of persons generally stand but a poor chance in it. May I add, without being open to the charge of sitting in judgment on the words of Christ, that, to tell these men they were "the light of the world," was not unlikely to make them arrogant?

Believer. In replying to your objections, I must first ask you to notice the fact that the discourse before us is not, like the preceding ones, spoken to the multitude, but for the most part to a small company taken apart for the purpose. It is addressed to a select body of men,† who

* Into the question whether the sermon is or is not *identical* with the one recorded by Luke (vi. 12—49), it is not necessary here to enter. Those who wish to investigate this point are referred to Mr. Alford's notes on St. Matthew.

† From the 28th verse of the 7th chapter it would seem that during the latter part of the discourse, others had gathered round them, and shared the benefit of the instructions. Still, *as a whole*, it was obviously addressed to the disciples in particular.

had avowed their belief in the speaker—men who had seen His miracles, and who were now under a course of education for becoming His heralds, His witnesses, and His representatives. The teaching is therefore a step in advance of that of John; yet it is not so much *new* doctrine, as strong spiritual light cast upon the old. It is a grand commentary on John's doctrine of the "Kingdom of Heaven," showing the dispositions that were essential to its enjoyment.

The listeners are *Jews*, and have no idea of ever becoming anything else. The teaching, therefore, is Jewish; but stripped of everything national, ceremonial, or exclusive. Whatever lessons, therefore, may be deduced from the discourse for mankind at large, we must, I think, in order to gain them, sit down, as it were, by the select company, and endeavour to hear with their ears, and to understand *by the light they had*, rather than by that which we may now possess by means of further and fuller revelations.

The disciples had already been taught that the preparation needed for the coming "kingdom"—that reign of God which their prophets had foretold, *in* which they professed to believe, and *of* which the Jewish theocracy was a type—was moral and spiritual. They are now to be instructed more particularly as to its nature and extent, by the blessings pronounced on *certain states of heart and mind*.

The *first* benediction falls on the head of the "poor in spirit"—not, allow me to say, on the "poor-spirited," as you have it. The poverty of spirit referred to here, is *not* the opposite of what we usually term *high-spiritedness*, nor has it, I apprehend, any direct bearing upon our relations with our fellow-men. It refers to that sense of *inward* poverty and want, which is opposed to spiritual self-suffi-

ciency,—the great sin of the Pharisees, and indeed of the Jewish nation,—the sin which, more than any other, led them to reject Christ.

The *second* blessing is on those that "mourn" (in spirit); for again it is the inward state, and not outward circumstances, to which our Lord is referring. It might be thus expressed, Blessed are they that (in spirit) *pine like men in exile* for this 'kingdom,' mourning with a loving sorrow over evils they cannot remedy, and sighing for a home they only see as yet afar off. This kind of mourning is quite consistent with happiness, but it was directly opposed to the self-satisfied and worldly spirit which pervaded the Jewish people.

The *third* blessing is on "the meek," a class of persons with whom, as you rightly judge, the world has very little sympathy: the bearing of this virtue is towards *men*, rather than God. Our Lord teaches here that, during the reign of violence, injustice, and wrong,—the existing state of the world at that time, and to a great extent ever since,—the true pioneers of the better kingdom are not the proud and restless spirits who are continually rebelling against *power;* but the men who in patience possess their souls, trusting in God, and whose state of mind is habitually in harmony with all that is gentle, loving, and forgiving. It is not denied that such may often be trampled upon; but the promise is, that the earth, from which they are all but excluded now, shall be *theirs by inheritance—i.e.*, when the kingdom of God shall fully come (see Psa. xxxvii. 11; Isa. lvii. 13—15; lx. 21; 1 Cor. iii. 21).

The *fourth* is plain enough. Blessed are they whose desire—constant as daily appetite—is to be better men, to attain nearer and nearer to God-likeness: "they shall be satisfied." The *fifth* is on the "merciful," the pitiful,

the benevolent. They shall find mercy. The *sixth* is on "the pure," or *sincere* in heart,—the single-hearted, or, as we sometimes term it, right or soundhearted, as opposed to the outward and merely ceremonial purity of the Pharisees. They shall see, *i.e.*, *discern* God, and the nature of His promised reign and kingdom (2 Cor. iii. 18, and 1 Cor. xiii. 12). The *seventh* is on the "peacemakers,"—those who are not only quiet and patient themselves, but active promoters of peace and love among others. The *eighth* is on the "persecuted for righteousness sake," teaching first, as a general principle, that it is a blessed thing to suffer for the right; and then applying this principle to the circumstances in which these very men were about to be placed for the sake of the Gospel.

Allow me now to ask—Can anything be more beautiful, more comprehensive, more Divine and heavenly, than these brief but pregnant sayings? Is it possible to imagine that any man, *able* to invent a Gospel like this, and *elevated* enough to recognize such sentiments, could be in any sense either deceived or a deceiver?

Sc. Certainly not: fraud is, I think, out of the question. Still difficulties abound. This "kingdom of heaven," or reign of God, as you term it, by and through Messiah, is always spoken of as "*at hand*." When did it come? Is it yet come? or is it to be regarded as an equivalent term for immortality, eternal life, heaven, or any other name by which we are accustomed to describe everlasting happiness?

B. It is *not*, I think, to be confounded with what is usually called heaven or eternal life. I cannot escape the conclusion that it refers to a triumphant reign of Messiah *upon earth* after the first resurrection. This was the great paramount idea in the Jewish mind, gathered from the

peoples, and cherished, with an intensity of feeling of which the world has no similar example.

Now Christ never refers to this expectation as a delusion. He never attempts to lead the minds of the disciples *from this* to the contemplation of something more spiritual. On the contrary, he fosters the hope by purifying it from selfish and evil admixtures; while, by the constant use of phraseology which, in their minds, admitted of no other interpretation, He stamps, as it were, His authority upon it, and stereotypes it for all time.

As we advance we shall see that He corrects *three* vain and erroneous notions which had gathered around the original conception; viz., *first*, that it was *an exclusively Jewish kingdom*, belonging, therefore, only to Abraham's natural descendants, and not to his spiritual seed; *secondly*, that it was *a carnal dominion*, involving the triumph of human pride, passion, and selfishness; *thirdly*, that it was to be entered upon *by that generation* and enjoyed apart from moral fitness for it. All these errors he corrects; but he nowhere indicates that the fundamental idea was a wrong one, or that it would end in disappointment.

In answer to your question, "When did it come?" or "Is it yet come?" I should reply (asking you to bear in mind what I have already said on its two aspects, the internal and the external), that it *commenced* at Pentecost, when Christ, having completed His work on earth, ascended to heaven, and through the Holy Spirit, "the Comforter," sent down, as "gifts to men," those endowments by which the disciples were enabled to *understand* the past, and to *proclaim* the future; but that it still waits for its final consummation at the second personal advent of the Lord.

Some think—and with great reason—that this earth, when

renewed, will be not only the scene of Christ's triumphant reign, but also the eternal dwelling-place of the redeemed. The phrase, "great is your reward in heaven," as used in the 12th verse of the portion before us, means (stored up) in heaven, the place where God is, and where all future blessings are represented as in safe keeping.

Why there should be such long delay in the absolute and complete coming of this kingdom, is to us mysterious. It seems as if great moral changes in the world were to be effected, like great physical ones, only by the action of ages. *The process of change* in all such cases is, as a rule, silent and unperceived; *the result* frequently as instantaneous and startling as the earthquake, which in an instant of time levels cities, and changes the very aspect of nature. And so, we are told, it will be at last, "the Son of man cometh as a thief in the night."

One objection of yours still remains to be noticed,—the application of the terms "salt" and "light" to the disciples. Now, so far from thinking, as you appear to do, that arrogant feelings would be excited by the application of these terms to them, I am quite satisfied that the effect would be directly the reverse.

In the previous portion of the discourse, our Lord had mainly been instructing them as to what they were *to teach;* He now tells them what *they must be.* He sent them forth into the world to do the work of "salt" in it,—to check the progress of corruption,—but He tells them plainly, that if their conduct did not correspond with their doctrine, they would very justly be objects of contempt, only fit to be trampled upon as worthless. He warns them, *as the publishers to mankind of His Gospel*, that, by becoming such, they necessarily assume to be lamps or "lights,"—that they

could not do *His* work and be hid—and hence the exhortation so to live, that men might glorify God in them.

It seems to me that so far from being lifted up by such a commission, the effect would rather be to weigh them down under a sense of its exceeding heaviness. The true servants of Christ in all ages are, more or less, "lights in the world," and, more or less, the "salt" of society, purifying its corruptions. But the knowledge of this fact, accompanied, as it must be, by the consciousness of weakness and perpetual failures, of frailties and inconsistencies innumerable, is always deeply humiliating. T.

(The Number for December will contain a Title and Index, to complete the first Volume. Those who approve of the Publication will, it is hoped, endeavour to obtain new subscribers for the coming year.)

STANDING NOTE.—Whatever may be the *apparent* character or tendency of any Articles found in "THE INTERPRETER," we wish it to be distinctly understood that *they are not intended* to encourage secession either from the Communion of the Church of England, or from any body of Protestant Dissenters. Secession leads by inevitable consequences to sectarianism; and sectarianism we abhor. Our sole aim is to promote such an amount of freedom of thought and liberty of action in church matters, *within* existing bodies, as may best tend to further that true Christian Unity which is *counteractive* of all Schism "in the Body."

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints—as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine.*

SALVATION.

THE word "Salvation," *when used in its higher sense* in Scripture, always implies deliverance from the dominion of sin. Perhaps it would not be too much to say that salvation, properly so termed, *consists* in this emancipation, eternal happiness being its consequence, or adjunct.

Solomon seems so to regard it when, at the dedication of the Temple, and in the words of his father David (Psa. cxxxii. 16), he prays, "Let thy priests.

[Registered for transmission abroad.]

O God, be *clothed with salvation*, and let thy saints rejoice in *goodness*" (2 Chron. vi. 41). Such, too, is the conception of the Psalmist (cxlix. 4), when he sings, "The Lord taketh pleasure in His people; He will *beautify* the meek with salvation." So Isaiah (xii. 3) prophetically exclaims, "With joy shall ye draw water out of *the wells* of salvation;" and again, "Thou shalt call *thy walls* Salvation, and thy gates Praise" (lx. 18); and again, "He hath clothed me with the *garments* of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness" (lxi. 10). In all these cases, whether salvation be regarded as a "garment" to be "clothed" upon withal; or a "robe" to be "beautified" with; or a "well" for refreshment and purity; or a "wall" for a defence,—it is plain enough that *a present*, rather than a future, blessing is referred to, and that its subjective character is mainly regarded.

In the New Testament, Salvation is, if possible, still more closely associated with a present deliverance from moral evil. Christ himself is announced by the angel at His birth, *not* as a Saviour from God's wrath, although such undoubtedly He was (Rom. v. 9), but as a deliverer from the bondage of evil, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus" (*i. e.*, Saviour), "for" this reason, "He shall save His people from their sins" (Matt. i. 21). Peter, addressing the Israelites, says, "Unto you first, God having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, *in turning away every one of you from his iniquities*" (Acts iii. 26); and that Paul teaches

the same doctrine to the Gentiles, when he tells them that "The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation," (Rom. i. 16) is evident from his calling upon the Philippians (ii. 12) to "*work out*" their "own salvation with fear and trembling," because it is God which *worketh in them* "both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Hence too, he tells the Corinthians (2 Cor. vii. 10) that "godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation" (deliverance from evil); and reminds the Ephesians (i. 13) that in them "the Gospel" of their "salvation" had been "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" which was the "the earnest" of their "inheritance." It is in this way that "the grace of God (now) bringeth salvation" (not, will one day bring it) "teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present evil world." Hence it is a "helmet" (Eph. vi. 17) for daily use in the warfare of time; and the "wise" are they who *live* it (Eph. v. 15).

Now, if this be true, Salvation must be a thing of *degree*, since all experience shows us that Christians, so far as man may judge, are found in every shade of deliverance from the power of evil; some obviously, and to a deplorable extent, under the influence of it, others seemingly all but entirely emancipated from its power. But Salvation is not on this account either less of grace, or based on anything short of God's forgiving love; for whether the deliverance accomplished be little or much, it is always the work of the Holy Spirit, and it always commences in the con-

sciousness of freedom and reconciliation with God through Christ, since it is as a child, and not as a slave, that salvation is in any sense wrought out.

And yet, how seldom is this view of a sinner's salvation distinctly taught! Universally admitted, how rarely is it enforced! How generally is deliverance *from sin* merged in what seems to most men a far greater thing, deliverance *from Hell.*

Many reasons might be given for this. *One* may, undoubtedly, be found in the supposition ordinarily entertained, that where, as in the case before us, the promised blessing is *two-fold*,—involving the objective as well as the subjective, the future as well as the present—it matters little which aspect is made most prominent. *This is a great error;* for it proceeds on the notion that present salvation from evil, and future salvation from Hell, are but two sides of one truth; whereas, in fact, they rather stand to each other in the relation of root and branch (the grace of God being in each case the same), the one *springing out of* the other. Men are not saved from Hell by some great act of sovereign grace, *in order that* they may be saved from sin; but they are saved from sin that, being thus changed, they may become altogether unfit for Hell.

It is not difficult to arrive at *an infallible test* by which the truth or falsehood of what we have stated may be proved. Every tree is known by its fruit. Let a man think of Salvation *only in the light of deliverance from wrath*, and selfishness, in some of its worst forms, is almost sure to be the pro-

duct. Let him think of it *only in the light of deliverance from sin*, and no such evil can, by any possibility, be engendered. We are not maintaining that such a separation is to be desired; for "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder;" but we do maintain that it is of the utmost importance that Salvation should be habitually regarded *in the light* in whch it is presented to us by God himself.

That some will be stumbled at Salvation being regarded as involving *more or less*, we doubt not. Such will naturally exclaim, "Surely Scripture teaches, in relation to *every man*, that he is either *in* Christ, or out of Christ; saved or lost; a child of God or a child of the devil: and if so, how can Salvation be, in any intelligible sense, a thing of degree?" Future happiness *may*, indeed, involve more or less, but a partial Salvation is incomprehensible.

We simply reply, Let us, before we are positive on such a matter, endeavour to ascertain, with some care, what Scripture *does* actually teach on the subject. This we propose to do in a future paper. A.

INTERPRETATIONS.

No. 9.

1 Cor. ii. 9, "*Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.*"

This is one of those texts respecting the *true* meaning of

which there is no difference of opinion among judicious commentators. From Matthew Henry downwards, every *careful* reader of the epistle has expounded it as referring to the mysteries of the Gospel, which God ordained before the world was (v. 7), which were unknown to Jewish rulers (v. 8), but which are now *revealed* by the Holy Spirit (v. 10). And yet the words are perpetually quoted *as if they referred* to the glories of the upper world, now hidden from our eyes, but one day to be enjoyed by the redeemed. The mischief produced by this mode of using Scripture is incalculable; and the *extent* to which it has proceeded is little suspected. False associations are thus thrown around true words, and an impression produced which it is almost impossible afterwards utterly to eradicate. It may well be questioned whether preachers are ever justified in *so accommodating* a text of Scripture as to conceal or to vary, in any degree, the meaning God has attached to the words in the place where they occur. Scripture is *inspired truth* only *in the sense* in which it was originally given; in no other sense whatever is it the Word of God. A passage in the Bible, torn from its context, and applied in a sense *different* from that in which it is used by the inspired writer, has no authority. Whatever the words may be, they cease altogether, in such a case, to be the words of God, and become the mere assertions of an erring man. The text now under consideration is, probably, an *accommodation* of a passage in Isaiah (lxiv. 4), being introduced by the words, "As it is written;" but although the words are varied, the *thought* is not changed. Modern theologians too often quote as if the *words* of Scripture, irrespective of the thoughts they embody, had something magical about them. L.

NECROMANCY.

DEUT. XVIII. 9—14, "*There shall not be found among you . . . a Necromancer* (*i. e.*, a seeker to the dead). *For all that do these things are an abomination to the Lord.*"

THAT thousands, perhaps tens of thousands, of intelligent men and women, many of them Evangelical Christians, should in the nineteenth century, night after night, prostrate their understandings before the supposed spirits of their dead parents or relatives, is surely a noticeable fact.* It may well justify the calling of attention to some portions of Scripture which distinctly refer to these practices.

It can scarcely be doubted by any unprejudiced reader of the Bible, that the law of Moses against consulting with *familiar spirits*, and also against Necromancy, or seeking to the dead, is in full force under the Christian dispensation; *not, indeed, as a law of Moses*, but as part of that more general and patriarchal law, which was in no degree superseded by the Mosaic economy, and the violation of which rendered the Canaanites an abomination to the Lord.

* "*Spiritualism* was till recently a technical term of mental science. It is now fully recognized as 'the doctrine that departed spirits hold communications with men,'—that a direct intercourse can be maintained with departed spirits through the agency of persons called *mediums*. A doctrine which has thus early won for itself a place in the vocabulary of psychological science can hardly be treated as ephemeral or insignificant. It has theological and practical bearings that cannot be disregarded."—*British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, xxxiv.

The reason given for denouncing death on such offenders is explicit,—"For ALL THAT DO THESE THINGS are an abomination to the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them (the Canaanites) out before thee" (Deut. xviii. 12). Nothing can be clearer than that Necromancy is as much an abomination *now* as it was in earlier times. The Mosaic dispensation did not originate the law; and the advent of the Christian dispensation has not repealed it.

Nor does the wickedness involved in these practices belong, as Spiritualists suppose, only to dealings with *evil* spirits; for Saul sought after the spirit of the good Samuel, and *yet died for the crime.* The Word of God is explicit on this point. "So Saul *died for his transgression,* and also for *asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it*" (1 Chron. x. 13).* Everywhere in Scripture, wizards, witches, soothsayers, diviners, magicians, consulters with familiar spirits, and sorcerers,—*whatever these terms may mean,*—are regarded as *criminals of the deepest dye* (Lev. xx. 27; xix. 31; 2 Kings xxi. 6); and it surely is worth notice, that the last of these (sorcerers) are expressly named in the Apocalypse in company with murderers and idolaters, as those who "shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Rev. xxi. 8).

We are not among those who consider *the reality* of spiritual manifestations in the present day to be in any sense *proved.* For aught we can tell, they may be altogether

* This text, and some others referred to, are quoted with much force in a letter by the Rev. EDWARD WHITE, Minister of St. Paul's Chapel, Kentish Town, to the "British Spiritual Telegraph," in reply to a communication in favour of Spiritualism by WILLIAM HOWITT, the poet.

delusion, or fraud, or some inexplicable compound of both,* acting on superstitious, or sceptical, and, therefore, credulous minds; for, as Dr. Whately somewhere truly observes, "Credulity is but want of faith," since "to disbelieve a thing is to believe its opposite." Yet it is hard to suppose that three millions of human beings, (this is the number claimed), including many accomplished and able men, are all of them either dupes, or knaves, or fools.

Be this as it may, the *fact* is unquestionable that *multitudes* of intelligent persons in England, in the United States, and in all parts of the Continent of Europe (*whether under the influence of delusion or not matters little*), are now "seeking to the dead,"—doing all they can to obtain communion with spirits, and acting under the belief that they succeed. The serious point in such proceedings is, that the moral tendency and the guilt of this Necromancy *is precisely the same*, whether spirits manifest their presence or not. The criminality is in the desire, and in the attempt, to force a way into regions forbidden to man.

The prevalence of these attempts implies three things,—

First. That with the errors and superstitions of our fathers relative to witches and witchcraft, has passed away *all belief in the truth which underlay those superstitions*, viz., the *possibility* of sinning against God, and debauching our own souls by communion with demons, whether human or satanic.

Secondly. That side by side with this unbelief there has sprung up an amount of credulity relative to converse

* "*Some inexplicable compound.*"—The possible *admixture* of fraud and folly, as well as of worldly policy, with actual demonism, has always been acknowledged. The heathen of old recognized the necessity of spiritual discernment to separate true from pretended demonism.

with spirits, which astonishes by its childishness, while it afflicts by its impiety.

Thirdly. That these two united,—unbelief on the one hand, and credulity on the other,—have already engendered an amount of levity and familiarity* in supposed dealings with the invisible world, which must, in the nature of things, *prepare men to receive with respect and attention*, as curious and harmless, any communications made by evil spirits, should such delusive teaching ever be permitted.

This view of the probable results of Spiritualism receives strong confirmation when it is regarded, as it certainly should be, in its bearing on what may, without impropriety,

* "*Levity and familiarity.*"—That sane men should really *believe* they are communicating with the dead, and yet see no inconsistency in doing so in the most light and trifling manner, sometimes joking with them, and sometimes scolding them as obstinate and unmanageable, would seem incredible were it not well known that this is a feature in all superstition. The ancient idolater, who worshipped a dead man deified, saw no inconsistency in being prostrate before the image one day, and the next, under the influence of rage, dragging it in the mire. Granting, for the sake of argument (it has often been said), that this Spiritualism *is* a device of Satan, what imaginable object can the Evil One be supposed to have in encouraging the childish nonsense that characterizes these manifestations? The reply is obvious. The end and aim of the proceedings (if Satanic) is precisely that which is obtained; viz., the rooting out of the popular mind, and out of the Church of Christ too, of all those old associations which make dealing with the spirits of the dead either fearful or sinful; and the substitution in their place of *playful* emotions, mingled with that *half* scepticism and *half* superstition, which invariably characterizes idolatrous tendencies. It is hard to see how in any other way the civilized world could be so well prepared to bow before the working of miracles by demons (Rev. xiii. 8—14), whenever that predicted apostacy takes place.

be termed *the phenomena of the last days*, as revealed in Scripture. For "the Spirit speaketh expressly,"—so says St. Paul to Timothy,—"that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons,"*—a prophecy already partially fulfilled in the apostacy of Rome, and destined, it may be, to find a still deeper significance in the future, when, as St. John tells us, "the spirits of demons (δαιμονια), working miracles, shall go forth unto the kings of the earth, to gather them together to the battle of the great day of God Almighty" (Rev. xvi. 14); when Satan shall do great wonders, and deceive them that dwell on the earth by means of miracles; when all shall worship the Evil One "whose names are not written in the book of life" (xiii. 8—14); "when false Christs and false prophets shall arise, and show great signs and wonders; and when, if it were possible, the very elect themselves shall be deceived" (Matt. xxiv. 24).

Whatever these passages may precisely mean, or *whenever* they may be expected to find a fulfilment,—a question on which Christians differ,—this, at least, is certain; they point to some hitherto unknown development of spiritual agency yet in the future, and they force us to conclude that perils of the most awful kind attend every step of the way which leads from the living Christ to the regions of the dead.

The *religious* spiritualist may believe, as he doubtlessly

* Demons is the proper translation of the word rendered devils in our version of the Bible. The demons of the Greeks are recognized by all their poets and philosophers as the spirits of dead men. The Scriptures also recognize the Baalim, or gods to whom Israel apostatized, as dead men deified (Psa. cvi. 28; Isa. viii. 19).

does, in spite of abundant evidence to the contrary, that the ghosts whom he summons are not evil; that they honour Scripture; that they sympathize with all goodness; and that the *effect* of their manifestations is powerfully to check that tendency to materialism which unquestionably characterizes the age in which we live. Be it so. Our answer is brief, but decisive. The demons at the advent of Christ bore witness to His Messiahship, *yet were evil spirits still.* The divining spirit in the Philippian damsel gave the clearest testimony to the apostleship of Paul, yet was cast out by him as evil. Satan himself is not unfrequently "transformed into an angel of light" (2 Cor. xi. 14).

D.

TRUTH.

All Truth is for a *prepared* people. The seed and the soil must be adapted to each other, or no good will be done. To *discern* Truth, when it is presented, is perhaps the highest function of man. Man, in fact, only sees *truly* that which God reveals to him. A wide waste of seeds is therefore the law of life. It is so, because God only works on *the many* through the instrumentality of *the few. Elect souls* must always be brought under the influence of any truth *before* it can spread widely. But this is a slow process. He, therefore, who imagines that he has a truth to teach, but is unwilling *to wait,* or angry because he is misunderstood, has mistaken his vocation. Opposition only finds the true man calm and kind, however sorrowful he may be.

T.

FORMS OF THOUGHT.

THE LOW CHURCHMAN.

A LOW CHURCHMAN, properly so called, is one who adopts a theory in relation both to the Church and to Christianity, of a character all but diametrically opposed to that of the Anglican.

To him,—and he is hence denominated Evangelical,—the Church of Christ is a purely spiritual thing, limited, by its very nature, to persons who have been baptized, not with water only, but with the Holy Ghost, and therefore, as a spiritual body, incapable, in any scriptural sense, of being extended to those who, to the eye of the renewed man, are merely Christians by outward profession. To him, *the body* of Christ consists, not of any outward communion, however apostolic, but of all persons, in all parts of the earth, who by the grace of God have been called out and separated from a world lying in wickedness, and been made partakers of a new nature; a change made manifest, in one form or other, by evidences of spiritual life, which mark such out, as it were by the finger of God, as the living among the dead.

He supports this view by those various passages of Scripture which speak of the necessity of the new birth, of conversion, and of being "created anew in Christ Jesus;" and denying that these phrases were simply intended to indicate the greatness of the change which had transformed the blaspheming Jew, or the idolatrous heathen, into an avowed follower of Christ, he maintains that they invariably refer

to that spiritual re-creation of the soul in the image of God, without which no man, be he heathen, Mahomedan, Jew, or nominally Christian, can enter into the kingdom of heaven.

If reminded that similar phrases are found in the Old Testament, and applied to Jews, although under that dispensation all alike were regarded as God's chosen people, and all alike admitted to the services both of the temple and the synagogue, he replies, that the Jewish dispensation was typical and outward,—the "shadow of good things to come;" that the Christian dispensation is substance and fulfilment; that it is, from first to last, inward and spiritual; that Christians are "a peculiar people;" that the Church is a "little flock," and that all true believers were "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world."

As he cannot, in a National Church, or under Episcopal government, carry these views fully out, he often professes to adopt, with various modifications, the High Church theory; submits, as a present necessity, to evils which are compensated, as he believes, by some important benefits; sighs for a purer communion, and does what he can, by meetings for prayer or otherwise, to indicate the distinctions which he cannot otherwise make manifest.

In his ecclesiastical views, as distinguished from those of the High Churchman, a similar diversity prevails. He rarely advocates the doctrine of apostolic succession, for he cannot believe that God would permit the authority of His ministers to flow through a channel so impure as that of Rome; he shrinks from holding, in any definite form, the dogma of baptismal regeneration, for he cannot altogether reconcile it with the necessity of personal conversion; and he denies that participation in the Lord's Supper is of any advantage to the unspiritual; regarding the Holy Commu-

nion rather as a privilege to be enjoyed by the believer, than as a means of grace to the unconverted.

Growth in the Divine life, like the original quickening of the soul, he considers a special work of God's Holy Spirit, acting on each individual chiefly by and through the preaching of the Gospel. Sacraments, therefore, occupy in his mind a secondary place; religious instruction the first. To him it is not the Church that leads to the production of the individual Christian, but individual Christians that constitute the Church.

As a consequence of these views, the doctrine of justification by faith, rather than that of the incarnation, becomes the central point of Christianity; for by it he holds the sinner is delivered from all bondage, whether of works or of religious rites; is led to abandon man, to cleave only to Christ, and to seek of Him in solitary prayer,—prayer as solitary as if no other human being existed on the earth,—that peace and joy which can alone spring from a deep sense of pardoned sin, and a consciousness of reconciliation to God.

In all this it will be seen, the outward is invariably subordinated to the inward, the Church to the individual, and the official to the spiritual. Duty is supposed to flow from right doctrine, rather than sound views of truth from practical obedience; conversion becomes the one thing needful; grace, from first to last, is a free and sovereign gift; and the election to life of each individual a result of the councils of Eternity.

Every Low Churchman is not, indeed, a Calvinist, but every Calvinist who is in the Church at all, whatever he may call himself, is, in fact, a Low Churchman. According to *his* theory, the High Churchman, *as a rule*, is one who does not freely and fully preach the Gospel; he, in truth,

regards him as little better than a purified Romanist. *By* the High Churchman, he (the Low) is in turn regarded as in doctrine somewhat Antinomian, and in ecclesiastical standing, *a Dissenter under authority*.

We do not, of course, pretend to have described accurately the views either of every High Churchman, or of every Low one. Each party has its "Scribes,"—its periodical and other writers, who exaggerate its opinions, and envenom its literature; its "Pharisees," who look with supreme contempt on all who separate from *them;* its "Sadducees," who glory in their unbelief; its "Herodians," who habitually subordinate the spiritual to the temporal; and its "Essenes," who seek in solitude and asceticism the perfection of their nature: but fair, honest, moderate-minded men would, we believe, frankly admit the general truthfulness of the portraiture we have given. In both parties are to be found persons, not a few, who fancy they blend opposing theories in a sort of practical *juste milieu*. But, regarding each class as a whole, and apart from the idiosyncrasies of particular individuals, we have little doubt as to our having painted them correctly.

In a third paper we propose to inquire how far each of these theories may be supposed to involve truth, and how far error; for,—as it has been well said, in relation to these conflicting theories,—if, instead of violently opposing either, we were patiently to question each, in order to see *what it means*,—what is in the heart of him who is cleaving to it, we should probably find, underlying outward forms, though mingled with much human infirmity, some great principle common to both, in which the opposing theories have their meeting point. E.

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The completion of the First Volume of the Interpreter *affords a suitable opportunity for saying, that the extent of the circulation it may in future enjoy, will depend almost entirely upon its present readers. If they think it calculated to promote a fresh and earnest study of the Scriptures, they will, of course, endeavour to make it more widely known. It is scarcely necessary, perhaps, for the Editor to add that it is carried on, in every sense, as a work of faith and a labour of love, no one having the slightest pecuniary interest in the undertaking.*

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints—as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is that all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine.*

REGENERATION.

THE precise phrase, "Regeneration" (παλιγγενεσία), occurs only *twice* in Scripture; once in the sense of a change of *profession by baptism*, "the washing (laver or pool) of Regeneration" (Tit. iii. 5); and once in the sense of *resurrection*, "the Regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory" (Matt. xix. 28). The term is used by Greek writers to express the *re-birth* of all nature in the spring; and by Josephus, when describing the edict of

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Darius, by which the Jews were permitted to return to Jerusalem, it is applied to the "regeneration" of his country.

Kindred phrases, however, such as being "born again," "born of the Spirit," becoming "new creatures in Christ Jesus," occur repeatedly in the inspired volume, and generally indicate that great, inward, and effectual change in the heart and character of a man, which is wrought by the Holy Spirit in connection with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and under the influence of which *self* ceases to be a man's centre, and God becomes such.

The doctrine is not peculiar to the *New* Testament. The prophet Ezekiel (xi. 19) assures the Jews that a time will come when God "will give them one heart," put "a new spirit" within them, take "the stony heart" out of their flesh, and give them "an heart of flesh." Yet, very soon after (xviii. 31), regardless of what we should consider logical consistency, or the force of necessary inferences, he calls upon the same people to cast away their transgressions, and to *make themselves a new heart* and a new spirit. Further on (xxxvi. 26, 27), he repeats the promise that God will one day do it; but places the fulfilment far in the future, and soon after connects it with the resurrection (xxxvii. 13—14). It was to these passages that our Lord probably referred, when, speaking with Nicodemus on the new birth, He says:—"Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" (John iii. 10.)

In the Gospel of St. John, in Christ's interview

with Nicodemus, we have the first intimation of the applicability of these strong figures to Jews or heathen embracing Christianity. And our first inquiry is,—What impression did the conversation there recorded *finally* make upon the Jewish Ruler? We say finally, because, in the first instance, it is clear the language of the Lord was either *misunderstood*, or regarded as a saying *too hard* to be received. Which of the two may be uncertain. If the former, Nicodemus exhibits the most astounding ignorance of figurative language; if the latter, he considers it impossible that any change so radical as that intimated, could be necessary at his age, and in his position.

Set right on both these points; *first*, by the intimation that the term was used in the same sense in which it had been used for ages (John iii. 10)—the sense, in fact, in which the Jews applied it every day, when they baptized proselytes from heathenism; and *secondly*, by the reiterated assurance of its absolute necessity to the Israelite as well as to the Gentile (ver. 5, 6), the question still remains, 'How did Nicodemus understand it?' Did he suppose that the Lord meant to say that he,—a Ruler of the Jews,—was yet an unconverted man, in the darkness of unbelief? or did he rather understand Him to teach that *the fact of coming* to Christ at all was, in itself, a proof of the new birth; since the Lord assures him that it was not the working of miracles that had convinced him, but (whether he knew it or not) that

higher work of the Spirit, without which no man could "see (*i. e.*, discern) the kingdom of God"?

We believe that neither the one nor the other supposition *fully* expresses the truth. We see no reason whatever to suppose that Nicodemus had any thoughts or feelings corresponding to those which *we* invariably associate with the term being "born again." He was a Jew, a Ruler of the Jews, and nothing in the record indicates that he was either hypocritical or self-deceived. He came timidly indeed, and by night, but with a true heart; and he came, not simply as an individual, but *as the representative of a class.* "WE (the rulers of the better sort) *know* (he says) that thou art a Teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."

The reply of Jesus is explicit,—"Except a man be born of water (*i. e.*, except he *openly* avow me by a public profession, in baptism,—the baptism of John*), and except he be "born again," also "of the Spirit" (*i. e.*, become lowly as a little child, and submit himself to that blessed influence), he can neither truly discern the character, nor enter into the fellowship, of the kingdom of God. For this kingdom involves much more than at present appears,—much that will be hard

* "The Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, *being not baptized of him*" (Luke vii. 30). "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John xii. 42—43).

to receive; viz., the lifting up of the Son of man, and the salvation of the world, Gentile as well as Jew, through Him (John iii. 11—21).

Whether Nicodemus ever got beyond his timid half-heartedness,—whether he ever was baptized and confessed Christ openly,—is very uncertain; the probability is that he did not, for he appears to be precisely the same man at a later period, when, in his place among the Chief Priests and Pharisees, he counsels justice and moderation (vii. 50—52); nor does the fact of his uniting with Joseph of Arimathea (another secret disciple) in the burial of Christ indicate more than is expressed in his first nightly visit. It is possible that both these men might be amongst those who were converted after Pentecost, but no assurance of the kind is conveyed to us in the sacred records; an omission not without its lesson, if it teaches us to abstain from judging one another, or attempting to decide on character without adequate information.

But here the question naturally arises,—and it is a very important one,—"Did our Lord, when He uttered the words, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,' mean to teach us that, without a change as great and radical as that which is experienced by the elect, no man living can escape the eternal damnation of hell? or did he simply intend us to understand that through this Divine transformation alone can any one become a member of the Redeemed Church,—enjoy a *present* salvation,—and be a king and priest to God for ever and ever?"

On the first supposition, every unrenewed man, without exception, ignorant or enlightened, Christian or heathen, hangs trembling by a thread over the verge of the bottomless pit; and distinctions between the virtuous and the vicious, the moral and the profane, are altogether lost sight of in the tremendous alternative involved. On the second, such persons, although excluded from "the Church of the First-born," as vessels for more or less dishonour,—shut out from the high privileges and glorious dignity of those who are *emphatically* to be made "partakers of the Divine nature," to "judge angels," and, under the Redeemer, to teach and to rule in the world (or age) that is to come,—are yet, on the *supposition of their being other than absolute rejectors of grace*, not excluded either from mercy now, or from the hope of advancing blessedness hereafter.

That there is much in Scripture calculated to support the more hopeful view, and to justify us in concluding that Regeneration should rather be regarded as the evidence of election than of grace,—the peculiar privilege of those who enjoy here an *anticipative* reception of future blessing, and who are to form that Church which is emphatically "the Bride of the Lamb," can scarcely be disputed. Whether the term "new-born" is ever applied in Scripture to any but those who are regarded and generally spoken of as "chosen before the foundation of the world," may be doubtful. Alford thinks that in that well-known passage (Heb. vi. 4—8), where it is said to be "impossible for those who were

once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance," a distinction is drawn between the Elect and the Regenerate; and he regards the text as "one among many, where in Scripture, as well as from the teaching of the Church, we learn that 'Elect' and 'Regenerate' are not convertible terms." "All the elect," he says, "are regenerate; but all the regenerate are not elect. The regenerate may fall away; the elect never can.

Let this be as it may, it is at least certain that, *generally speaking*, the two terms are regarded as one in signification. St. John, in the very first chapter in his Gospel, indicates this, when he says, that they among the Jews who received Christ, were persons to whom God "*gave power*,"—or, as it reads in the margin, "right or privilege,—to become the sons of God;" which were "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (i. 12, 13). It is such only who can say, "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be *a kind of first-fruits of His creatures*" (Jas. i. 18). It is of such alone that the apostle writes, when he declares that "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 Jno. iii. 9). It is of such St. Paul speaks, when he says, "Neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but *a new creature*" (Gal. vi. 15); a term which he has just before explained to mean "faith, which worketh by love"

(Gal. v. 6); or, as he expresses it in another place, "keeping of the commandments of God" (1 Cor. vii. 19).

Texts like these obviously do not apply to all who confess and call themselves Christians; but must, from their very nature, be confined to those who have "crucified the world," "put on Christ," and count themselves but "pilgrims and strangers" here below.

Further, the great change in question is always described under terms which almost seem to forbid the idea of human co-operation. When a man is spoken of first as "dead," and then as "alive from the dead;" first as the "old" man, and then as the "new;" as quickened from above, like the babe in the womb; as made alive, like the plant while it is yet underground, it is exceedingly difficult to associate with the cause of so thorough a change, anything at all approaching to an efficient human volition. Such a transformation seems of necessity one which can only be spoken of as the *special*, direct, and sovereign act of Him in whom "we live and move and have our being."

Finally, as those who enter into the kingdom of God are always spoken of in Scripture as a "little flock," to whom it is the Father's good pleasure *to give* the kingdom (*i. e.*, rule and authority in it); since the crowning sin of man is always declared in the Bible to be unbelief,—a sin which cannot be chargeable on the myriads who have never even heard the name of the Great Object of our Faith; since salvation is always spoken of as *a present blessing*, deliverance even now from the love and power of sin, we are compelled to

conclude that Regeneration, in its highest sense, is a sovereign and therefore limited gift; that the Regenerate will form the court rather than the company of heaven; that this dispensation is not one of universality, but of selection; that it is preparatory, and not final; that while its *primary* object is to call out and educate those who are to be the kings and priests of the age that is to come, its *secondary*, but by no means less important end is, by the agency of the elect, and through the preaching of the Gospel *now*, to convert sinners from the error of their ways; to develop, through sin and sorrow, the ever varying phases of human character; to evolve, by slow but certain processes, those great moral and spiritual principles which are embodied in the revelation of a Divine Redeemer; and to prepare mankind at large for that coming judgment, and final probation, which will be introduced by the second and personal advent of the Son of God.

What, on this supposition, will, in that mysterious world to which all are tending, be the precise condition of the converted, but not regenerate; of the unconverted, because ignorant or thoughtless multitude; of the evil and profane; of the heathen who have never heard of Christ; of the Jew, from whom He is still veiled; of the followers of Mahomet—*yet*, as it would almost seem, the sword and scourge of God wielded for the punishment of a corrupt and idolatrous Christianity; and of the tens of thousands in the most enlightened lands, whom nobody knows how to rank or where to place,—*we do not profess to know.* It is only permitted

us to say, that *all* will be judged righteously, and "according to the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or bad;" that the feeblest faith in Christ will then be found to have had a life in it; that the least service rendered to a disciple will, *because* rendered to a disciple, not lose its reward; and that *they only have cause utterly to despair*, who, having deliberately and knowingly rejected the counsel of God against themselves, despised and persecuted His children, and denied the Lord that bought them, can, *on no Scriptural ground whatever*, expect anything better than "a fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation that shall destroy the adversary."

Surely it is not unreasonable to hope, that these may be much fewer in number than we are sometimes led, in our short-sightedness, to imagine. A.

LAZY READERS.

"It has been remarked by the celebrated Haller, that we are deaf while we are yawning. The same act of drowsiness that stretches open our mouths closes our ears. It is much the same in acts of the understanding. A lazy, half attention amounts to a mental yawn. Where, then, a subject that demands thought has been thoughtfully treated, and with an exact and patient derivation from its principles, we must be willing to exert a portion of the same effort, and to *think* with the author, or the author will have thought in vain for us."—*The Friend*, vol. i., p. 34.

SCRIPTURE.

CHAP. I.—*On Hindrances to the Profitable Perusal of Holy Scripture.*

WE have elsewhere expressed our conviction, that no book in the world was ever so generally possessed, and so little comprehended, as an English Bible in the present day. We propose now to inquire, *why* it is so?

An explanation of the fact certainly cannot be found in any supposed absence of "Scripture Helps," or other works having for their design the rendering of Holy Scripture plain to Christians in general; for books of this class are very numerous, and many of them exceedingly useful. Jewish customs, emblems, and worship; the Temple and the Tabernacle, with their construction and furniture; the usages of the East; the histories of its various nations, and such like, have, indeed, of late years, been detailed in every variety of form, and, by pictorial representation, or otherwise, brought down to the comprehension even of a child.

We are not intending to trespass on ground already so well trodden. To do so would be either superfluous or impertinent. Others have provided *helps* in abundance; it will be our aim to point out, and, if possible, to remove, *hindrances*,—to show, if it may be, *how* it comes to pass that good men, lovers in common of the same Word of Truth, and alike seeking for Divine guidance, *interpret so differently*. Why it is that, as age after age rolls on, each coming generation only repeats the opinions of its pre-

decessors,—follows the same lines of thought,—nourishes the same prejudices,—and stereotypes at once old formulas and old divisions?

With this end in view, the first question we propose to ourselves is,—How *ought* we to understand the Bible?

The natural answer would certainly seem to be, "As we should understand any other book,"—by paying due attention to its plain, obvious, and grammatical meaning. For if the great principle of our Protestantism be of any value; if the Bible be, as we assert, a *popular* book, written for, and addressed to, the masses of mankind; and if, as we profess, it is the gift of One who never deludes us by unrealities, it is impossible that it should need for its comprehension anything beyond *moral sympathy*, and that *common sense* which is pre-eminently the inheritance of the people.

The *history* of the book justifies this supposition. The words of Moses were chiefly addressed to semi-barbarous tribes; the utterances of the Prophets were proclaimed to their countrymen without distinction of class; the songs of David were embodied in *public* worship; the words of Christ were spoken to the fishermen and artisans of Judea; the Epistles were written to persons who were, probably, in the main, uneducated; and the whole volume, regarded as the earliest, and, at one time, the only means of Christian education, made its way in society, and undermined the superstitions of the Roman empire, without the aid either of the pulpit or the press. We say, without the aid of the pulpit, because, *in the modern sense of the word*, no such institution existed at the time to which we refer. Short homilies and brief exhortations, intended to impress the portion of Scripture read, were doubtless delivered at a

very early period by elders supposed to be qualified for this work, but *a sermon*,—as we understand the term,—"a rhetorical discourse upon some passage of Scripture," was unknown until a much later period. And it is worth notice, that so long as the Word of God was *thus read*, with comparatively little exposition, and enforced only by the tones of a living voice and the love of a renewed heart, it was not only understood, but *so uniformly understood*, that, for a century and a half at least, differences of opinion were regarded as comparatively unimportant, and division found no resting-place for the sole of its foot.

The Word of the living God was not *then* regarded either as a book of statutes to be expounded by the scribe, or as a series of propositions to be explained or developed by the experienced logician, but, as it really is, the message of God to His sinful child, spoken as a man speaketh to his brother or to his friend.

Strange, indeed, is the change that has now come over us, when ministers all but universally teach, and people all but universally believe, that the acceptance of *the Bible alone*, however sincere and heartfelt such acceptance may be, can inspire no Christian confidence, since such a profession may mean anything or nothing; that the book is one from which doctrines of all kinds, even the most contradictory, may be at least plausibly supported; and that apart from *a more definite expression* of the truth it involves, than is given by itself, it can convey no *certain* sound; that it is, in short, only to be regarded as truly received when it is understood in a given sense, and expounded in harmony with the confessions of *the Church*, whatever that term may be supposed to mean.

Such we believe to be, at the present day, the accredited opinion of the Christian world, and we are disposed to

regard its frequent assertion, as the expression of a conviction which is partly honest, and partly dishonest; *honest*, however mistaken, when it proceeds from self-distrust,—from undue veneration for accomplished commentators,—from the over-ruling power of hereditary teaching,—or from the perplexity which is naturally engendered by diversities of judgment and multiplied sects: *dishonest*, when it is adopted from a desire to prop up any existing ecclesiastical organization,—when it springs from a disposition to exalt human creeds, catechisms, and formularies over Divine teachings,—or when, as is often the case, it is made an excuse either for the neglect or disbelief of Scripture altogether.

But whether honest or dishonest, nothing is more certain than that such a persuasion is in itself singularly mischievous; since it furnishes, on the one hand, the most plausible of all arguments in support of modern assertions that a revelation from God, by or through a book, is impossible; and since it sustains, on the other, the contemptible assumptions of those who pretend that the Bible was never intended to be read without an authorized interpreter, and that the Church, or the Pope, as the case may be, should be regarded as the representative of Christ on earth for this purpose.

Further, this notion of the *indefiniteness* of Scripture, when regarded apart from a given interpretation, is as senseless as it is mischievous, for no delusion can be greater than to suppose that we do *really* give a more explicit character to Gospel truth, and that we bind men more firmly to it, when, having exchanged the Divine for a human expression, and transferred, as we fondly imagine, the spirit of Scripture into the substance of theological propositions,

we demand adherence, in some form or other, to "the idol" we have set up. It never seems to occur to us that the absence of any such compendium in Scripture clearly indicates its undesirableness; that in that which is *omitted*, as much as in that which is included, we ought to see the Divine wisdom; that in this, as in so many other things, "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men."

The truth is, the moment we attempt to condense or translate words that are "spirit and life," into forms of thought which are neither the one nor the other, we more or less *change* their meaning, and insensibly become expositors of the Word. And since we do this, only that we may more effectually "judge" as to the reality of one another's faith, God frowns on our devices by confounding our language; so that it comes to pass, that the very words and phrases in which we express our convictions, and by which we hope to promote oneness, are changed into "traps and snares," amid which we "fall, and are broken." Nothing more is needed to explain the endless divisions of Christendom, than the general abandonment of the "unity of the Spirit," gathered from the Word itself, for the false lights of an imaginary and impracticable uniformity, sought in the more definite expression of truth by theological propositions.

Away, then, with the God-dishonouring notion that Divine revelation is either unintelligible or indefinite. *There is no reason whatever, in the nature of things, why Holy Scripture should not be as well, and as uniformly understood by those who read it, as any other book of similar date, now chiefly known through translations.*

Granting, as we cheerfully do, that some peculiarities

attach to the *Old Testament* which make its actual interpretation difficult, and which have "encouraged critics to take such liberties with Hebrew as they could not venture upon with languages of which we have more ample remains," —*the New Testament Scriptures* are absolutely free from any difficulty which is not common to all ancient books. "Other writings are preserved to us in dead languages,—Greek, Latin, Oriental,—some of them in fragments, and all of them originally in manuscript. Difficulties occur in *them* similar to those which attach to Scripture; these are found equally in sacred and in profane literature. But the meaning of classical authors is known with comparative certainty; and the interpretation of them seems to rest on a scientific basis. *It is not, therefore, to philological or historical difficulties that the greater part of the uncertainty in the interpretation of Scripture is to be attributed. No ignorance of Hebrew or Greek is sufficient to account for it.*" *

Why, then, is it read so differently by different persons? This is the problem to the solution of which the men of this generation must bend all their powers, if they would preserve the priceless treasure of the Gospel for their children and their children's children. We shall endeavour to contribute what we can towards this result, in humble prayer that the Father of Lights would be pleased to vouchsafe unto us, for this great purpose, His holy guidance and benediction. D.

* Essay by the Regius Professor of Greek in the University of Oxford, 1860.

MATTHEW vii. 14, "*Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life*" (marg., "How strait is the gate!"

COMMENTATORS.—"The strait gate is Christ Himself, who elsewhere calls Himself the door."—*Gill.* "The strait gate is *implicit faith* and obedience."—*Scott.* "The strait gate is self-denial and holiness."—*Doddridge.* *All* these meanings are combined, add some later critics, with a marvellous inability to discern the contradictions such methods of interpretation involve.

Now what, it may fairly be asked, can an ordinary reader make of confusions like these? Amid such bewilderment of thought, how is he to answer the tempter who suggests the insufficiency of Scripture, unless expounded in accordance with the decisions of the Church?

It is clear that he can only do it in one way, viz., by the fearless recognition of a fact,—now generally disregarded,—that our Lord and His Apostles were as much distinguished for precision of thought and power of expression as for practical wisdom; and, therefore, that all their sayings have one, and *only one*, clear and definite meaning; which meaning is to be discovered,—on the supposition of the translation being correct,—by attention to the context, and *by that alone*, due regard being had to the *circumstances* under which, and the *persons* to whom, the words were spoken.

Apply this principle to the text in question, and all becomes plain. Our Lord, throughout the sermon of which the words under consideration form a part, had been inculcating a high and pure morality; *not*, as some suppose, drawing a contrast between the morality of the Old Testament and the higher morality of the New,—but between Rabbinical traditions and the spirit of all God-given law. He sums up thus:—"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets." He then adds, "Enter ye in at the strait gate;" as if He had said, "My kingdom is only to be entered by the acceptance of that *higher* interpretation of truth and duty which I have been giving you, *in opposition* to the accommodating method of the Pharisees. *Mine* is a narrow way, and strait, but it leads to life; *theirs* is a broad way, and popular, but it leads to destruction. Hence follows the *warning*, "Beware of false prophets" who teach any other doctrine; and the whole is supported by an *illustration* drawn from the condition of a house built upon the sand when exposed to trial. L.

FORMS OF THOUGHT.

HIGH AND LOW CHURCHMEN.

IN two former papers we have endeavoured to point out some of the characteristic features which *distinguish* High from Low Church theories. In *this*, we shall seek for some principle common to each, under which they may be supposed to meet and to unite.

We have seen that the two systems are based on diametrically opposite views as to the nature of the Church of Christ, and as to what constitutes a Christian; that while both hold the Church to be, in one aspect, a visible thing, and in another aspect an invisible, the High Churchman regards the visible as, for the most part, truly representing the invisible; while the Low Churchman refuses to admit any such necessary connection, and requires, in every case, evidence of spirituality of mind, as proof of real membership; that the one attaches a value to the outward and the official, which the other altogether disclaims; that while Baptism is held by both, it is a different thing to each; that the Lord's Supper assumes to the one more or less of the character of a sacrifice, while to the other it is simply a symbolic memorial of Divine love and of Christian unity; and that, while both regard the preaching of the Gospel as a Divine ordinance, the one considers it all but supreme in importance, while the other habitually subordinates it to public prayer and to sacraments. Both, in like manner, profess to accept the doctrine of justification by faith; but by the one it is rarely presented in its integrity, the work of Christ

for man, and that of the Holy Spirit *in* man, being commonly blended as efficient causes of the sinner's salvation; while by the other these two operations are usually separated, sanctification being regarded, not as a cause, but simply as a fruit of our justification.

The moral and spiritual *tendencies* of the two systems are equally distinct; that of the High Churchman often leading to formality, that of the Low Churchman to spiritual pride. According to the one, almost all men will be eventually saved; according to the other, few *comparatively* will escape eternal perdition. The one, (the High Churchman) is in constant danger of disregarding distinctions between the spiritual man and the unspiritual, of confounding the living with the dead; the other (the Low Churchman) is equally liable to exaggerate the differences which obtain between persons who are alike taught of God. Both frequently fail to distinguish the man that "feareth God," from "him that feareth Him not," but from directly opposite causes,—the High Churchman, from hastily concluding that mortal eyes can rarely, if ever, discern the evil and the good; the Low Churchman, from confidence that he can *always* do it.

Certain it is, that in all respects the Low Churchman has more affinity with Geneva than with Rome; that the Dissenter only carries out more fully the principle on which Low Churchmanship is based; and that, if it were not for the accident of Episcopal supervision and State connection, Low Churchmen and orthodox Nonconformists would have few, if any, points of difference. As matters now stand, the former (the Low Churchman) is stopped in his endeavours to sever the clean from the unclean by the necessities of his position; while the latter (the Nonconformist), fearless and unembarrassed, proceeds along the course hitherto

common to both, and avowedly and openly separates, as he thinks, the believer from the unbeliever, the converted from the careless, the renewed from the unregenerate. The one he admits to communion; the other he excludes. To the one he confides the choice of a minister, the conduct of discipline, the control of all Church affairs; from the other he derives that portion of pecuniary advantage which arises from the letting of pews, and from subscriptions to societies.

The degree of strictness with which this discriminating principle is enforced by Dissenters, varies somewhat in different bodies, and even in Churches of the same order; but, as a rule, it obtains in all who are regarded, either by themselves or by others, as orthodox Christians.

The Romanist, on the other hand, but prolongs the line drawn by the High Anglican. Refusing to recognize any limit to ecclesiastical pretensions, he claims for his Church the power of actually changing the sacramental bread and wine into "the body, blood, soul, and spirit" of the Lord; falls down and worships the new creation; and then, as if struck with terror at the work of his own hands, flies for refuge to Mary and the saints, renounces all individual responsibility in relation to the discovery of revealed truth, and, eager for spiritual dominion at any price, unscrupulously subordinates inward life to outward form, denying, even with oaths and curses, any work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of man, which leads to personal convictions at variance with the authority of his Church.

The question now returns, *Where* is the meeting-point which unites two theories, apparently so discordant? That there must be such a spot somewhere—that some great principle common to both underlies each theory—seems unquestionable, unless we are to believe that only one of

these parties is really Christian; a conclusion to which no right-minded man could wish to arrive, except under the pressure of the direst necessity.

May it not, then, be found in the two-fold character of Christianity itself,—at once inward and outward, personal and social, individual and national? May it not be dimly foreshadowed in those intimations of a greater and lesser salvation and condemnation which are scattered throughout the New Testament, and indicated by such contrasts as "few stripes," and "the worm that never dies,"—"saved so as by fire," and "an abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"?

That these statements are but two sides of one and the same truth is certain; and if it be said that High Churchmen often seem to forget the one—the inward, personal, and individual character of religion,—it cannot be denied that Low Churchmen and Dissenters frequently undervalue the other—the outward, social, and national aspect of the same faith. The work and the witness of each *may* therefore be essential to the completeness of the Divine testimony, and the one be honestly regarded as, after all, little more than a supplement to the deficiencies of the other.

It is impossible to deny that, in a state of society like our own, it is exceedingly difficult to bear a full and sufficient witness to one aspect of the Gospel, without, more or less, throwing the other unduly into the shade. The difficulty is one which would scarcely be felt in the first ages; it springs almost entirely from the conquests that Christianity has made; it presses *most* in countries like our own, where the Gospel is generally preached, and where a profession of religion is all but universal. In such a condition of things, it is always difficult to distinguish the true Christian from

the man who is self-deluded or hypocritical; while the attempt to do so, *needful as it is at all times to the life and purity of the Church*, is beset with dangers which, if unchecked by other influences, would very soon become fearfully mischievous.

We shall see this more clearly, if we reflect for a moment on the past historical developments of the two theories under consideration.

With the New Testament in our hands, it seems impossible to doubt that the stand-point of the Apostles, in relation to the Church, was purely spiritual,—that they considered the Church in its normal state as including those only who, by the grace of God, had been separated from the world, and renewed in the spirit of their minds. The terms in which they address their converts seem to preclude any other supposition; for they are spoken of as "saints," "elect," "faithful in Christ Jesus," "blessed with all spiritual blessings," "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world," and such like,—phrases which it is impossible to suppose imply nothing more than a mere outward profession of Christianity, and which no one would use in reference to all who, in the present day, regard themselves, and are regarded by others, as Christians.

But it is by no means equally clear that the Apostles viewed Christianity *in no other light*,—that they denied or ignored the possibility of its ever embracing, within its capacious arms, persons of a very inferior description to those who were thus addressed, or that they altogether forbade the expectation that in its onward march, the Church would be found to include many to whom the designation of saint could not, with any sense of propriety, be honestly applied. On the contrary, the prediction of a

great falling away, and the declaration that a mystery of iniquity was even then working, seems clearly to indicate that, as a consequence of its extension, the Church would include within its borders a multitude of persons who, from the weakness of their faith, and the wretched imperfection of their characters, would be easily led astray by designing men, and be even liable to make shipwreck both of faith and a good conscience.

The singular fact that Scripture never refers to the *secondary* influences of Christianity, powerful as these have always been in their effects upon society, would alone seem to indicate that, in relation to the future, much was kept back, and that the Apostles confined their communications to matters which had a direct bearing on the faith and practice of their converts. Certain it is, that long before their death the Church ceased to consist only of the renewed, and that ever since, multitudes have been included in its communion, in all stages of ignorance, and marked by every shade of feebleness and inconsistency. On the other hand, it is equally true that *the effect* of such additions has always been to bring about coldness and declension; and that spiritual life has only been preserved by the rising up of *individuals* from time to time, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, who have borne witness, generally amid obloquy and contempt, to the personal character of Christianity; to the emptiness and fruitlessness of mere outward forms; and to the necessity of that "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Such a man was Augustine; such were many of the Fathers; such were Luther and the reformers of the sixteenth century; such were the Puritan Confessors of the seventeenth; such were Wesley and Whitefield in the eighteenth; and, such, to this day, are the descendants of

these men, amid all the narrowness and sectarianism which they too often exhibit.

But it is only as *witnesses* to neglected or forgotten truths, that they claim our admiration and reverence. The history of Evangelicalism when in the ascendant,—whether in England, during the Protectorate,—in Scotland, in the times of the Covenanters,—or in America, under the Pilgrim Fathers, is far from encouraging the belief, that *it* alone is adapted to the furtherance of the Gospel, or the *only* form of religious thought which can consistently be held by a Christian man. Rather does it appear that the one theory supplements the other, and that both are employed by the great Head of the Church in the accomplishment of his gracious purposes towards mankind. For it *may* be, that, owing to human imperfections, truth in all its entireness cannot be fully and perfectly presented in any other way.

But this fact, if it be one, is melancholy at the best, and affords no excuse for indifference in relation to the will of God on any matter. Truth is one, and Duty is one, however broken or varied their reflections in human conduct and experience. Every man has his own calling of God, his own work to do, and, where deep personal convictions exist, his own view of truth to honour and exalt. Let him only do so humbly and charitably, fully persuaded in his own mind, yet deeply impressed with the consciousness of his own weakness and fallibility, and he will scarcely fail to fulfil the purpose God designs *him* to accomplish. E.

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints—as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is that all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine.*

CONVERSION.

CONVERSION (επιστροφή), which literally means *turning round*, is a term used in Scripture sometimes to express an entire and radical change of *conduct*, following renewal of heart; and sometimes to indicate return from a temporary course of wrong doing. It is used in the former sense in the Acts (xv. 3), where Paul speaks of the "conversion of the Gentiles;" it is used in the latter sense by our Lord, when He says to Peter, "When thou art converted,

[Registered for transmission abroad.]

(επιστρεψας), strengthen thy brethren" (Luke xxii. 32). In Peter's case the conversion was sudden, and effected by a look—"The Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly" (Luke xxii. 61, 62). Under ordinary circumstances, conversion (although not without exceptions) is an outward and visible thing, and, generally speaking, is, by the Divine blessing, identified with human effort and influence.

Regeneration, on the other hand, as implying a "new birth," and regarded as the first and transition step from death unto life, is the work of God *alone;* it is probably in all cases an instantaneous, and it is certainly a *secret* work.

Conversion is a process which may be repeated again and again; each successive spiritual impulse forming a new era in the history of the soul. It is *action* rather than life; it is commonly the result of a definite form of human agency; and it is generally brought about by influences which act upon the nature of man under all the ordinary conditions which affect responsible beings. When our Lord says *to His disciples,* "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xviii. 3), He is not enforcing the doctrine of the new birth, but simply teaching the necessity of *turning away* from those false notions which had led them to ask who should be greatest.

Regeneration, on the contrary, is, from its very nature, complete, and commonly involves a *present*

consciousness of forgiven sin; it is a change transcending all ordinary laws; it is generally independent of outward circumstances, and it is always *anticipative* of future bliss. It is, in short, the peculiar donation which God bestows on the elect, who thus receive "power (or privilege) to become the sons of God; which are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 12, 13). It is the accomplishment *on earth* of a change of nature, which, in other cases, may or may not be effected in the world (or age) that is to come.

Conversion, although equally the work of Him from whom cometh "every good and perfect gift," is not *in the same sense* supernatural, inasmuch as it may be, and often is, but temporary. If a man exchange a life of sin for a life of obedience; if earnestness and seriousness in religion take the place of habitual indifference; if pure and blessed tastes and affections are obviously superseding those which are low and depraved, we may safely speak of such an one as converted; and *hope* that the outward and visible change indicates the inward condition of the soul,—that it implies the regeneration of the whole nature by the power of the Spirit of God. But months, nay years, may elapse, during which it would be neither safe nor right for us to form any practical decision on the question; for, on the one hand, differences in degree are very apt to be confounded by us with differences of kind; and on the other, changes, the most important in a man's character, may be

accomplished *so gradually* that no human wisdom is competent to decide when they took place, or *so suddenly* that their reality and value cannot be tested. Even in cases where the change is the unquestionable result of religious impressions, it is often impossible to decide upon its precise character until proved by its fruits.

These distinctions, which derive all their value from being Scriptural, are of great practical importance when viewed in connection with the various agencies God has appointed for the conversion of the world.

The question must often occur, both to the minister of the Gospel and to the private Christian,—'What is the actual value of the influence that can be exercised by one man over another in relation to his spiritual interests?'

Sometimes it seems as if it must be rated very low indeed: "I have no encouragement to preach," says Mr. Cecil, in his Remains, "but the belief of a continued Divine operation. To bring a man to love God, to hunger and thirst after the mind that was in Christ,—with man this is impossible! But God has said it shall be done, and bids me go forth and preach; that by me, as His instrument, He may effect these grand ends: *and therefore I go.*"

An eminent American divine (Dr. Edward Griffin) puts the same sentiment still more distinctly and forcibly. After arguing, that as it was necessary for Moses to stretch out his arm, or the Red Sea would not have divided,—for the trumpets to have been blown, or the walls of Jericho would not have

fallen,—for the voice of Ezekiel to have been heard, or the valley of bones would have been undisturbed, he thus proceeds,—"God sent Ezekiel to say, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord,' when He knew that the bones would never hear without His supernatural interposition. And the command was a sufficient warrant and encouragement to the prophet. If God should bid *me* go and preach to the dead in yonder grave yard, I would go. *With no other encouragement,* I now stand over *this* valley of the slain (the congregation he was addressing), and say to the dead of my people and kindred, 'Come out of your graves, ye bones, that are very dry. Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.'" *

We do not know that evangelical preachers generally would like to express their views in precisely these terms, but we are quite sure that the words embody the sentiments of thousands and tens of thousands of the most excellent Christians the world has ever seen. Only let it be granted that regeneration and conversion mean *in Scripture* the same thing, and that none but the regenerate are saved from eternal ruin, and it follows, of course—regeneration being supernatural—that what are usually called means of grace, while appointed *antecedents* of conversion, are not second causes;—that if an earnest exhortation makes a deeper impression than a frigid one, it is but a *coincidence*

* "Lectures delivered in Park Street, Boston, U.S., by the Rev. Edward D. Griffin, D.D." 3rd Edition.

between the supernatural and natural order of Divine operations; that the only end of preaching is to produce *attention to truth;* and its only use to prepare the way for a Divine work on such souls as God has foreordained to save. An Arminian would of course put the case somewhat differently, but on the supposition of his being a believer in the supernatural character of regeneration, the result cannot be different. *Such are the inexorable demands of logic in theology.*

This view of the Gospel, and of its work in the world, proceeds, of course, on the supposition that Divine sovereignty decides the eternal condition of *all* men,—decides it, not in the sense in which God decides all human affairs, viz., as *that great final cause* without whom no creature can live or move, and by whose *permission* alone it is that either sin or suffering can exist,—but *as the ordainer* of a destiny over which, however appearances may indicate the contrary, human volitions have no power.

We are quite aware that the faithful minister of the Gospel, however high his theology, always labours to show that this fixed Divine purpose in no way interferes with the freedom of the human will, or with the efficiency of human effort; that God hears the prayers of the living for the dead; that every man might, if he would, arise and receive light and life; that human powerlessness is but another name for human sin; that no man finally perishes, save by his own suicidal act.

Such reasoning, inconsistent as it may seem, generally commends itself to the devout mind; for its

defects are all lost sight of, in the relief which is felt at finding that even the sternest theology cannot venture to ignore those irrepressible instincts of the heart which assure us that God is Just, or those plain statements of Scripture which declare that He is Love. Yet, after all, we cannot but feel that preaching of this character, if not a riddle is a torment; and that its perplexity must be occasioned, either, on the one hand, by some strange perversion of the teaching of Scripture, or, on the other, by vain attempts to reconcile those partial and fragmentary revelations of the Infinite which we alone possess, with the demands of a logic which is, at best, but finite and human, and *may*, therefore, be an altogether inappropriate medium for the exposition of truths which are superhuman and illimitable.

We believe that much of the difficulty in question arises from a complete misapprehension of those portions of Scripture which reveal the existence of an elect Church; from extending to all mankind statements which are intended to apply only to the subjects of the Divine predestination; from the consequent assertion—implied if not expressed—of a doctrine of reprobation; and the final evolution of a system which no ingenuity can ever make consistent with human responsibility,—with a judgment according to works,—with "few stripes," or with "many stripes."

At the foundation of this error lies the notion we are endeavouring to controvert, viz., that in Scripture regeneration and conversion mean the same thing;

that both alike are sovereign and superhuman; that election from the foundation of the world is the distinctive characteristic of every soul of man who escapes the damnation of hell; that when St. Paul speaks of the power of the "potter" over the clay, "to make one vessel to honour and another to dishonour," he teaches *not*, as one would naturally suppose, that the same God who here, without injustice, makes one a peasant and another a prince, may also, in the world to come, give or withhold dignities at His pleasure—*that* would be intelligible enough—but, incredible as it may seem, that they intimate His right, as sovereign, to *ordain* to eternal misery *all* who are not the subjects of His electing grace. To support this theory, the choice of Jacob, even before his birth—an illustration used by the same apostle—is held to have had relation, not to the birthright only, but to all spiritual blessings.

We have not so learned Christ. We believe as firmly as any in electing love, and in the regeneration of those who are made partakers of it. We have evidence of the *fact*, in what such men do and dare in vindication of their high calling; justifying it, *sometimes*, at the price of all that the world calls good or great—comfort, reputation, human love, nay, even life itself; *always* at the cost of much self-denial, in the crucifixion of sin, the mortification of every evil desire, the abandonment of many of the objects of this world's ambition, and the constant sacrifice of self-will and self-gratification to the obedience of Christ and the love of the brethren.

These we hold to be the *invariable characteristics* of the man who is born, not of the flesh but of the Spirit; and if such persons form, as they certainly do, a very small proportion indeed, even of those who are surrounded by the purest light, and who enjoy the highest advantages, we cannot but conclude that *beyond* these there will be found a multitude whom no man can number, to swell the song of redeeming love, and to celebrate the victory of the God-man, when He shall have "the heathen for His inheritance," and "the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession."

We believe, therefore, in CONVERSION, even though it may not be accompanied by the regeneration of the entire nature. We believe in it, as the result of human influences co-working with God; co-operating with that blessed Spirit who not only gathers His elect, but is ever convincing "*the world* of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." We believe that the work of the Church *is now*, as it will be in the world to come, the conversion of sinners to the Redeemer; that its *real*, as distinguished from its apparent success, will always be proportioned to its zeal, and love, and *truthfulness*, both in word and deed; that its only sword is "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God;" that just in proportion as the Church *illustrates* the faith it preaches by a holy and consistent life, must be its power to elevate and to bless; that while nothing is too large for its expectations, nothing should be too small for its thankfulness; that as its one *message* is, "Be ye reconciled unto God," and its one *encouragement* the

assurance of the deliverance of the world, through Christ, both from the power and punishment of sin, so its one *object* should be the moral and spiritual advancement of all with whom it comes in contact; that every step in this direction, taken how or by whom it may, is to be regarded as of inestimable value; that every putting forth of *desire* after the good and the true, and especially after Him who is embodied truth and goodness, is to be welcomed as a work of the Spirit; and since every *good* thing which is begun here will be carried on hereafter, every shade of improvement, either in society at large, or in the individual transgressor, is to be rejoiced in as evidence that in no case whatever does God's Word return unto Him void; that it always accomplishes that which He pleases—that it invariably *prospers* in the thing whereto He sends it (Isa. lv. 11). A.

The highest evidence we can have of the commencement of a work of grace in the hearts of *the young* is, *a quickened susceptibility of the moral perceptions;* in *the aged* we should look chiefly for the breaking up of a cold and hard nature, and the awakening of a tender and devout spirit. It is folly to expect that an abandoned profligate, and one previously "not far from the kingdom of God," should in conversion go through the same processes. Exaggerated appeals to the consciences of young persons are almost sure to result in a deadening of moral sensibility.

E.

SCRIPTURE.

CHAP. II.—*On the* PURPOSE *for which the Bible was given; and the* PECULIARITY *which distinguishes it from every other book.*

IN taking up the Bible, it seems to us that the first question asked should be,

What is the object of the Book?

The answer is at hand. It professes to enlighten us as to our true *relation* to our Creator; as to our *duties* in this world; and as to our *destiny* in the world to come.

It has sometimes been said, and urged too, as a reason for neglecting Divine revelation, that the Bible deals with things *beyond* our experience and comprehension; that it has little to do with the every-day work of a practical man's life; that it is a book full of mysteries; and that it treats of matters regarding which nothing certain can by any possibility be known.

But this is not true. Nor would it be asserted, but for certain mistakes that men fall into, in consequence of confounding the things which it reveals, with the things which it merely hints at. Properly speaking, the Book *reveals* only that which really belongs to man—*the present*, which is his possession, and *the future*, which is his inheritance. To many things it only *incidentally refers*; speaking, for instance, of other beings and other worlds, with much beside, simply to the extent, and no further, than seems to be needful in order to our true comprehension of the

position we occupy in the universe. To fix our attention on these mere *accessories*, so to speak; to create difficulties out of *them*, and to neglect the immediate object of the revelation, is, to say the least of it, unpractical and absurd.

We would not, for a single moment, underrate, even in the slightest degree, the *importance* of these incidental communications. On the contrary, we receive them with a thankful wonder. For we cannot forget that we have no other account, besides that given in the Bible, of the birth of the world; of the entrance of evil into it; of the infancy and early character of its inhabitants; of the deluge; of the dispersion; of Jewish and cotemporary history; or of the various events that have educated the race, and made men what they now are. But we say again, as these things are not the *object* of the Book, so difficulties relating to them, however formidable, can afford no good reason for neglecting or rejecting *its immediate message* to ourselves, as creatures of God, destined, in one form or other, to fulfil the ends of our existence, whether in this world, or in that which is to come.

The next question, we think, should be,

With what authority does the Book speak?

And this opens up a field of investigation into which the multitude can scarcely enter; which few can independently investigate; and which, in any case, demands an expenditure of time and energy far beyond the available resources of ordinary men.

But it does not thence follow that nothing can be done. The results of the labours of generations in this department are now open to every eye, and may be mastered without difficulty. Short of this, the simplest course is—in the

absence of that *internal evidence* which is a later result of experience—to allow the mind to fasten on some one great tangible proof of Divine superintendence, such as the fact that, in the Bible, "a series of more than thirty writers, speaking in succession along a vast line of time (sixteen hundred years), and absolutely without means of concert, all combine unconsciously to one end; lock, like parts of a great machine, into one system; conspire to the unity of a very elaborate scheme, without being at all aware of what was to come after." This one argument, when well worked out in the mind, becomes unanswerable; it places the Bible in a position altogether distinct from that of any *pretended* revelation; and, apart from all theories about the *mode*, justifies the assumption that Inspiration, in some sense or other, and in a very high sense too, is *a great fact*.

So, in regard to any difficulties that may be suggested regarding false readings, or interpolations, or errors in translation, it is worth a great deal to know that no such errors, or omissions, or additions, if they exist, can at all affect the great purposes of the Book itself; because "all scriptural truths reverberate and diffuse themselves along the pages of the Bible; none is confined to one text, or one mode of enunciation; all parts of the scheme are eternally chasing each other; they diverge only to re-combine; and under such a vast variety of expressions that it is utterly impossible for truth to be neutralized by any mistakes of the kind supposed."

Even this amount of evidence is not, however, necessary for all. To slaves and peasants, and to the uninstructed generally, explain it as we may, the Book carries its own evidence with it, and truth, like the sun, is by them seen in its own light. There is, without doubt, *a sense of certainty*,

in relation to Scripture, which belongs to the simple-minded, and to such alone; a conviction which is neither the offspring of reason, nor the result of culture, but, like life itself, a direct inspiration of the Almighty. Such persons, independent of all study or learning, and apart from all reasoning, are, *in the state of the heart alone*, amply furnished with defences against falsehood, and are able to discern betwixt truth and error.

If it were not so, *he* would be the firmest believer who enjoyed the greatest advantages for obtaining and weighing proofs; truth would be the property of the few; and the multitude, if they believed at all, could only do so on the authority of those who were favoured with opportunities for research. But the very reverse of all this is the fact. The doubter is commonly the man of high attainment, of cultivated understanding, of varied learning. The peaceful and happy believer is he who has the witness in himself, and who cuts through the web of all sophistry with the simple exclamation, "I *know* it and *feel* it to be true."

But it is here proper to ask ourselves what we mean when we claim for the Bible a position *altogether distinct* from that which belongs to any other book? what we understand by the term *inspired*, when applied to Holy Scripture, *as a whole?*

Some persons seem to imagine that this constantly repeated phrase implies that the entire book, *just as it lies before us*, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of the Apocalypse, is a Divine utterance, as perfect and as infallible as the law of the Ten Commandments, given on Mount Sinai; as the Sermon on the Mount; as the predictions of the Prophets; as the Epistles of St. Paul; or as the Revelation of St. John.

But nothing can be more absurd than this notion, when looked into narrowly, and with no other motive than the ascertaining of its truth. The *fact* is, whether we choose to allow it or not, that if the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures is altogether inconsistent with the recognition of a human and therefore imperfect element in it; with errors, both in the text and in the translation; with discrepancies which, whether real or only apparent, man is unable to remove, we must give up the book altogether. To refuse to *see* these things, and, when reminded of them by enemies, to bury our heads like the foolish ostrich in the sand, can lead only to one result—*defeat*, the just punishment of those who love anything better than truth.

What admissions, then, we ask,—and with a sincere desire to be true both to ourselves and to others,—*ought* we to make in connection with a firm maintenance of the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures?

We reply,—

I. We should admit that a *human* element, and therefore one that is fallible and imperfect, runs through the entire volume. Not indeed *mingling with* the Divine, but sometimes flowing by its side as a distinct stream, and sometimes *externally* enveloping it as a garment. This is manifested,—

(*a*) In the peculiarity of *Style* which marks the different books,—a feature which varies with time, and is in strict accordance with the particular character, talent, or education of the writers.

(*b*) In the *Spirit* pervading certain portions, which is often merely human; *e.g.*, in the Psalms may sometimes be

seen, side by side, the inspired prophecy and the passionate expression of national or individual feeling. The same admixture may be observed in the song of Deborah, as well as in David's ode on Saul.

(*c*) In *Statements*, many of which are given merely from natural memory or from observation; some, purely historical, and others copied from official records.

(*d*) In *Science*, marked by the absence of anything like anticipative precision in reference to phenomena; *e.g.*, the occurrence of *colloquial* expressions, such as "the sun stood still in the valley of Ajalon," just as we say the sun travels daily from east to west. Recent discoveries in geology or other sciences are not *anticipated* in Scripture, simply because it is no part of the object of a Divine revelation to discover to man *anything* which it was intended he should find out by the use of his natural faculties.

(*e*) In *Actions*, some of which are obviously wrong, although recorded without censure, *e.g.*, the equivocation of Abraham before Pharaoh; the falsehoods of Rebecca and Jacob; the polygamy of Solomon and others.

These instances, it must be observed, are altogether *distinct* from cases in which things that would be *wrong in us* were *right* in those who did them, because performed in obedience to the direct command of God, *e.g.*, Abraham's willingness to offer up Isaac; Joshua destroying the Canaanites; the punishment of idolaters in Judea with death. Such narratives must be received *as facts* on Divine authority, whether they accord with our notions or not, and are to be regarded as peculiar to the dispensation to which they belong. They are recorded not for our *imitation*, but for our *instruction*; they are necessary to enable us to understand the times and the men to which they relate.

That which has been stated in relation to the OLD TESTAMENT is *in degree* equally true of the NEW.

(*a*) The *Style* of John is not that of Paul; and Peter lifts up his voice in tones distinct from either. Each, so to speak, wields his own pen, yet all are alike inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Gospels stand alone, miracles of a *calm colourlessness*, which has nowhere else even been approached.

(*b*) The *Quotations* made in the New Testament from the Old sometimes belong rather to the style of the writers than to the impulse of immediate revelation. They are often *mere allusions* to passages in the prophetical writings which, by accommodation, illustrate the events narrated; *e. g.*, "The prophet Jeremiah, describing the miseries of captivity, by a beautiful figure, represents Rachel deploring the loss of her children, bathed in tears, piercing the air with loud lamentations, and indulging inconsolable grief. When Herod imbued his hands in the blood of the innocents in Bethlehem and its vicinity, how applicable were the Prophet's words to such a cruel scene, and how happily are they cited. They are *a beautiful quotation*, but not a prediction of what then happened. There are upwards of *seventy* of these accommodated passages in the New Testament."*

(*c*) *Incidental references*,—passages which are unconnected with any truth, are not, properly speaking, to be regarded as inspired. Such an one is that where St. Paul requests that his cloke and parchments may be sent to him; and so is that in which he advises Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach's sake. The Apostle himself, on one occasion, draws a distinction between that which he speaks

* Horne, "Crit. Introd.," vol. ii. s. 1; ch. ix. s. 3.

authoritatively, by the Spirit of God, and that which he *advises* as a matter of prudence, or *urges* without commandment, yet "as one that had obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful" (1 Cor. vii. 6 & 25).

II. We should acknowledge with frankness and freedom,—gladly, if needs be, *for the love of the truth*,—that *errors*, both in text and translation, are to be found in the Bible, since the inspired writings have not been *wholly preserved* from the accidents to which all ancient books are liable through the carelessness or dishonesty of copyists, or through the misconceptions of translators.

(*a*) Where a *Number* is mentioned in the Old Testament, it is often very difficult to be sure of accuracy, because the Hebrews anciently used the letters of their alphabet to denote numbers; and where mistakes occur in relation to these letters, Scriptural statements are sometimes made to appear incredible and sometimes contradictory; *e. g.*, 2 Chron. xiii., where *four hundred* thousand, and *eight hundred* thousand, are obviously put for *forty* thousand and *eighty* thousand; also 2 Chron. xxii. 2, where *forty-two* years is put for *twenty-two*. (Compare 2 Kings viii. 26.)

(*b*) *Words* in the Old Testament are occasionally erroneous, and sometimes mistranslated, *e. g.*, 2 Chron. xxi. 2, where 'Israel' is put for 'Judah,' and xxii. 6, where 'Azariah' should be 'Ahaziah.' So the word rendered "little children," in the account of the mocking of Elisha should be "young men," since *the same word* is used in reference to Joseph when he was thirty, and to Rehoboam when he was forty years old. The whole character of the transaction becomes altered by this change.

(*c*) *Interpolations* are happily very rare. It seems, however, to be established by the all but universal consent of scholars, that *one* passage in the New Testament (1 John v. 7—8) is such; since it is found in no Greek manuscript of earlier date than the fifteenth century; is wanting in nearly all the ancient versions; and is omitted in the best critical editions of the Greek Testament.

(*d*) *Errors of translation* are numerous, but all agree that they are for the most part quite unimportant. The English version of the Scriptures is, *regarded as a whole*, probably the noblest work of the kind ever executed by man, and it is unquestionable that it fairly and honestly presents *the true spirit* of the original.

In summing up the whole, it is enough to say that none of these things are in the slightest degree inconsistent with any reasonable view of Divine inspiration, by which we understand "*the immediate communication of knowledge to the human mind by the Spirit of God*," to the full extent needful for the accomplishment of the object in view, *but no further*. This gift, the writers both of the Old and New Testament *had*, and *other men have not*. We believe that they had also, in addition to this, such an amount of Divine guidance and direction as effectually preserved them from any important error in imparting to others the truths they had thus supernaturally received. Their *words* were, in all probability, *generally* their own, but *sometimes*, we boubt not, *these too* were inspired; *always* where they were needed to form an appropriate vehicle for the embodiment of Divine thought. D.

No. 11.

MATT. xxii. 2—14 (comp. LUKE xiv. 15—24), "*And the wedding was furnished with guests.*"

COMMENTATORS.—"*The wedding feast.*" "This represents the provision made for precious souls in and by the New Covenant."—(*Matt. Henry.*) "*A wedding garment.*" "This may signify whatsoever God requireth of us, that we may be made meet for the kingdom of God."—(*Poole.*) "The righteousness of Saints,—Christ made righteousness to them."—(*Matt. Henry.*)

To *understand* this prophetic parable, and to perceive the utter worthlessness of such explanations as are given above, it is only necessary to *read* the text carefully and without prejudice.

The *subject* is the marriage of a king's son. *This*, says our Lord, the kingdom of heaven is like (see Rev. xix. 9).

Two things must be noticed; *first*, that the feast is neither *provided* nor *intended* for all the King's subjects. The invitation is only given to a certain part of them; and it was not till the invited (the Jewish, as the elect nation) refused to come, that the servants are sent out to bring in persons from (the Gentile world) the streets, lanes, highways, and hedges. *Secondly*, that even when the call becomes indiscriminate as to class, it is still limited as to number,—*all* are not to be brought in, only as many as were required, that "the house might be filled" (Luke xiv. 23), or as St. Matthew states it, that "the wedding" might be "furnished with guests."

Dean Alford justly says, the interpretation of this parable is, *the great marriage supper of the Son of God, i. e.*, His full and complete union to His Bride, the Church in glory; which would be to the guests the ultimate result of accept-

ing the invitation (see Ephes. v. 25—27). The difficulty of the *totality of the guests* in this case constituting the Bride, may be lessened by viewing the ceremony as *an enthronization*, in which the people are regarded as being espoused to their Prince" (see Psa. xlv.).

In the parable, as given in St. Matthew's Gospel, a man is found in the guest chamber, "*without a wedding garment.*" The question, therefore, naturally arises, "Who, or what class of persons, is he intended to represent?"

To get at the true answer, we must notice, *first*, that this discovery is not made until the king comes; *secondly*, that nothing is said about the wedding garment to show *what* it consisted in, or was designed to represent. All that we learn from the parable itself is, that the man in question was *not a recognized guest*,—the king is "ashamed" of him (Mark viii. 38); *thirdly*, that the intruder is self-condemned, and has not a word to say for himself,—he is "ashamed before the king at his coming" (1 John ii. 28); *fourthly*, that he is cast, from the brilliancy of the bridal hall, into the *outer* darkness, deepened by its contrast with the glory he has lost, and there, with others similarly disappointed, in ineffectual vexation he weeps and gnashes his teeth.

So are we told that "in the end of the world (or age) the Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather *out of His kingdom* (*i.e.*, out of His Church) all 'scandals,' (marg.) and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth *as the Sun* (resplendent in glory) in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. xiii. 41—43).

The man without the wedding garment, therefore, evidently corresponds to the man who, though enrolled

in the catalogue of saints, shall yet have his name blotted out of the book of life (Rev. iii. 5).

The learned Dean, to whose invaluable labours we are so much indebted, says, that "the garment" is *the imputed and inherent righteousness of the Lord Jesus*, put on symbolically, in baptism (Gal. iii. 27), and really, by a true and living faith (v. 26), without which none can appear before God in His kingdom of glory. Yet, while asserting this, he is obliged to admit that such a truth "*could not* be put forward here."

We submit, that this explanation is, on his own showing, not interpretation, but theology; sound theology, we grant, but certainly not to be found in the parable; for what could they to whom it was spoken know either about Christian Baptism or Imputed Righteousness? To say, as Dr. Alford does, that this truth, *at its subsequent manifestation*, threw great light on the parable, is altogether a mistake. Half the errors that in past ages have plagued the Church, and which plague it still, have arisen from this method of interpreting Scripture. Why cannot we be content with what our Lord teaches at any given time, without *adding* to it what we in our fondness imagine to be the additional light vouchsafed to us?

The particular instruction *here* imparted cannot well be mistaken. It is that God has on earth a people who, in distinction from others, are called, as the Bride of Christ, to honour and glory; that these are gradually being gathered in; and that even among *them* there will be found some who fail to make their calling and election sure. It *implies*,—since the number of guests is limited, while the invitations of the Gospel are universal,—that *beyond* those who are thus *specially* invited and honoured, will be found

a multitude of redeemed persons, saved equally by grace, yet not in the same sense, or with the same result, as "the Church of the First Born;" saved from the captivity of Satan, and brought under the blessed rule of the Deliverer, yet not partakers of that higher glory which is to be the peculiar privilege of the Elect.

No. 12.

Heb. xii. 8, "*But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.*"

Commentators.—"*Bastards*, Not acknowledged as spiritual children."—(*Stuart.*) "Spurious offspring of another Father, not of God."—(*Matt. Henry.*)

Again we are obliged to reject interpretations which rest on no intelligible basis, and which altogether ignore the precise distinction drawn by the Apostle, under the figure of illegitimate (νόθοι) and legitimate (υἱοι) children. The words are specially addressed to *believers* as such. *Both* classes of children are therefore sons, although not in the same sense. The one is the child who inherits the Father's name, wealth, and position; the other, although provided for, is altogether in a lower rank,—helped or supported, as may be needful, but not honoured or acknowledged.

What we really want to know is, whether or not we are to understand, from these words, that some *of the saved* will occupy the position of unrecognized, and others of recognized children? It is difficult to see what else *can* be intended.

The general lesson imparted is plain;—that persecution, severe discipline, and painful trial, so far from being indications of *a want of love* to us on the part of God, are, in fact, *evidences* that they who are "exercised thereby" are intended for higher services and nobler rank in the world to come.

But how, on this supposition, is it possible to avoid the conclusion that *two distinct classes of saved persons* will be found in that coming age, and that the illegitimate are those who, though delivered from the captivity of Satan, and brought under the rule of Christ, are yet not invested with the dignity and glory of the Elect Church?

It may, indeed, be said, that the "bastard" is a child only by creation, and therefore, as such, has no share in a blessing which is of grace. But this goes on the supposition that the writer *meant*, "If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers," then are ye undistinguishable from those who are "in danger of hell fire"—he does not, however, *say* anything of the kind, nor is there any reason to suppose that he intends to leave such an impression.

L.

STANDING NOTE.—Whatever may be the *apparent* character or tendency of any Articles found in "THE INTERPRETER," we wish it to be distinctly understood that *they are not intended* to encourage secession either from the Communion of the Church of England, or from any body of Protestant Dissenters. Secession leads by inevitable consequences to sectarianism; and sectarianism we abhor. Our sole aim is to promote such an amount of freedom of thought and liberty of action in church matters, *within* existing bodies, as may best tend to further that true Christian Unity which is *counteractive* of all Schism "in the Body."

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[*All communications for the Editor should be addressed to* No. 14, Bartholomew Close, Aldersgate Street, London, E.C.]

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at,—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints, as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine.*

HEAVEN.

THE word "Heaven" (οὐρανός), or, as it is frequently found in the plural form, "Heavens" (ουρανων), occurs about two hundred and eighty times in the New Testament alone. In *ten* of these it is translated "air,"—as in the parable of the sower,—"the fowls of *the air*" (Luke viii. 5). In *five* others it is rendered "sky,"—as in the discourse of our Lord,—"Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of *the sky*" (Luke xii. 56). In *eighty-six* other places, although

[Registered for transmission abroad.]

translated "heaven," it is obviously put rather for the visible firmament,—as in Mark xiii. 25,—"the stars of *heaven* shall fall;" or, as indicative of the direction from which Divine communications seemed to come,—as in Matt. iii. 16, 17,—"Lo, the *heavens* were opened;" and again, "Lo, a voice *from heaven.*"

In *eighty-three* instances heaven is expressly intended to indicate the peculiar residence of God and of the holy angels; the place *from* which Christ came, *to* which He is gone, and *whence* He will one day come again; *the locality*, so to speak, from which all authority and all blessing proceeds, *e.g.*, "Our Father which art in *heaven*" (Luke xi. 2). "*Heaven* is my throne" (Acts vii. 49). "No, not the angels which are *in heaven*" (Mark xiii. 32). "He that came down *from heaven* (John iii. 13). "The great High Priest, that is *passed into the heavens*" (Heb. iv. 14). "To wait for His Son *from heaven*" (1 Thess. i. 10). "The true bread *from heaven*" (John vi. 32); and such like.

In *thirty-three* other places the term is associated with "the kingdom" of the Redeemer, which is styled "the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. iii. 2), and the "heavenly kingdom" (2 Tim. iv. 18); just as the calling of the Christian is termed a "heavenly calling" (Heb. iii. 1),—his resurrection body a "celestial," or *heavenly* body (1 Cor. xv. 40), and the future residence of the saints, the "heavenly Jerusalem" (Heb. xii. 22).

In the book of the Apocalypse the term occurs *fifty-four* times, *sometimes* indicating the immediate residence of Jehovah, but *commonly* the world of separate

spirits, or *hades*. This intermediate state between death and the resurrection is generally called, in reference to the Christian, *heaven;* but not properly so, for it is but the temporary residence of the dead, and should never be confounded with the dwelling-place of God and of the holy angels.

Of the *immediate happiness* of the saint after his departure from earth, no Christian, who refuses to accept the theory that the soul sleeps till the day of the resurrection, can entertain a doubt. To such men unquestionably "to die is gain;" to be "with Christ" is "far better" (Phil. i. 21, 23.) "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Rev. xiv. 13). "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John xiv. 2, 3).

The phrase, "my Father's house," is, we are aware, usually understood to mean the peculiar and special dwelling-place of God. But not justly so. For everywhere else "the *house* of God" clearly stands for the *people* of God, the *family*, who are constantly represented as a "household," a "building," a "temple," and such like. The natural meaning surely is,—"In my Father's (household or family) are many (dwelling-places);" *not*, as it is usually read, "In my Father's habitation are many habitations."

So, when our Lord says, "I go to *prepare* a place for you," why should we conclude that it is heaven which needs *to be prepared* for us? Much indeed is said in Scripture about the need of preparation for the final triumph of the Redeemer, but it is *always* in reference to earth, and never to heaven.

Nor should we suppose that to be "*with Christ*," when we die, necessarily means to be with Him at the right hand of the Father; for it is not *there* that He manifests His presence to His redeemed children on their departure from earth. To imagine that He does so, is to deny the existence of *hades*, or the world of separate spirits, altogether. In the book of the Apocalypse, the apostle John, *entranced*, finds himself, indeed, in vision, before the throne of God; but that throne seems to be set in *hades*, where the Father, in His official character as the originator of the work of redemption, is, in this magnificent imagery, supposed to preside. The form of worship described as carried on there, corresponds to the course and manner of worship in the earthly temple; and, as has been well observed, there is a remarkable analogy between this representation of the invisible, and *the tabernacle service* generally, which, as we are told, was arranged *according to the pattern* (or copy) showed to Moses in the mount: all seeming to imply that the employment of separate spirits is that of continual worship, and that this holy and blessed service is very closely adumbrated by that of the Jewish tabernacle.*

* See Newton's Diss. on Rev. iv. and Saturday Evening.

Beyond these indirect intimations, we know little of the state of separate spirits *prior* to the resurrection. The parable of Dives and Lazarus merely teaches that in that state the righteous are at peace, and the selfish restless and unhappy; the *object* of the parable being *not*, as is frequently supposed, to reveal to us heaven and hell, but to enforce the great duty of love and kindness to poor brethren, and the certainty of future retribution. Both Dives and Lazarus were Jews; all the obligations, therefore, of the Mosaic law towards *a poor brother* rested on Dives, since both professedly belonged to the same "household of faith."

Where Enoch is, or Elijah, or Moses, we know not, —for these are exceptional instances,—but *we do know* that "David is not ascended into the heavens" (Acts ii. 34), but that his soul is yet in *hades*, and his flesh has seen corruption. We know, also, that while angels, God's messengers, ascend and descend, the "Son" *alone* has entered its everlasting gates (John i. 51; xx. 17). For, says Christ himself, "*No man* hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (John iii. 13). Nothing seems to be clearer than that we must all wait in the invisible till "the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised." "Beloved," says St. John, "*now* are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2). But we can find no authority whatever for asserting that the

happiness of the redeemed, either immediate upon death, or subsequent to judgment, is enjoyed *in heaven*, properly so called. We believe, on the contrary, that Scripture distinctly teaches that *after the resurrection* the spirit—till then in the separate state—is again united to the body, and finds its home and its work on the regenerated earth.

The point to be noticed is,—and, as contrasted with popular impressions, it is a very singular one,—that THE WORD "HEAVEN" IS NEVER USED IN SCRIPTURE TO DENOTE THE FINAL DWELLING-PLACE OF BELIEVERS IN THE WORLD THAT IS TO COME. We all speak of going to heaven when we die, and are apparently quite unconscious that we are using a term which is nowhere sanctioned in Holy Writ. A.

(*To be continued in our next.*)

FRANCE—ITS AGE OF PURITY.

"THE Reformed had as yet no organization, civil or ecclesiastical; they had no church, no creed, no fixed form of worship. It was a quiet, hidden movement in the hearts of men, thirsting for religious truth, for peace of conscience, for purity of heart and life. They sought each other out, and met to help each other on. But it was in small bands, in closets with closed doors, in the murky lanes of the city, in the lonely hut of the wayside, in the gorge of the mountain, in the heart of the forest, that they met to study the Scriptures together, to praise and pray. They did so at the peril of their lives, and the greatness of the peril guarded the purity of the motive. Ordinarily, they had no educated ministry.

"These first years of Protestantism in France may be fitly described as its age of purity."—*Wycliffe and the Huguenots, by the Rev. Dr. Hanna* (p. 149).

SCRIPTURE.

CHAP. III.—*On Hindrances to the Right Understanding of Scripture, which arise from Errors relating to the Work of the Holy Spirit.*

IT is often said, and not always in a devout temper, that the Bible *differs* from all other books, not only by the fact of its inspiration, but—which is of still greater moment—by the circumstance that it can only be read with advantage by persons who have received *special* grace from heaven to enable them to understand it. To a man who has not this new and divine faculty, whatever it may be, we are told all labour in relation to Scripture is vain, or, as it is usually expressed, that to such the book is *sealed;* since "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14).

This statement, as it is generally put, involves two things —a *truth*, and an *error*. We shall endeavour to separate them.

The truth, which underlies the statement, and which, be it observed, is *by no means peculiar to the Bible*, is this,—that *moral sympathy* is more or less essential to the full and accurate comprehension of any virtue or duty. A proud man cannot, properly speaking, *understand* the true character of humility, nor a churl the charm of liberality. They can *mis*understand these virtues easily enough, counting the one contemptible, and the other folly; but they cannot, in any enlarged sense of the word, *comprehend* either, till

they are in a state of mind to practise them. To say, therefore, as so many do, in broad and general terms, that an unconverted man cannot understand the Bible, *because* he is an unconverted man, is not only foolish—it is false; for the statement, put in any form, is *only partially true*, and it is almost always grievously misunderstood; since it is commonly supposed to imply a sort of *tacit* admission that such an one is very much to be pitied for his condition, and that perhaps he may not be altogether so responsible for it as is generally imagined.

The text we have quoted, which is the one always advanced in support of this supposed inability, has only to be regarded in connection with the train of reasoning of which it forms a part, in order to see that the apostle has no such meaning as that usually attributed to him. He is not speaking of plain, practical duties, such as repentance, or faith, or love to God, as if such obligations were incomprehensible to the natural man, but of deep Christian mysteries,—of "wisdom" for "the perfect;" "the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory," which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard," but which God had "revealed" to the apostles "by His Spirit;" and it is *these things* which he says, and truly enough, "the natural man receiveth not."

But does it follow that, because a special spiritual condition is essential to the understanding of special spiritual mysteries, that therefore something more than belongs to man generally,—something above and beyond what is given to the world, is essential to the understanding of God's message to all mankind? CERTAINLY NOT; and it is a delusion to imagine it.

It may be said that we have already admitted that a

certain amount of moral sympathy is essential; and since moral sympathy with the Bible is but another term for moral sympathy with God, and moral sympathy with God the same thing as the possession of a new nature, it follows, of course, that the renewing influences of the Holy Ghost are essential to any *profitable* perusal of Scripture. The logic may seem perfect, but the conclusion must be rejected; for the Bible is not given to man as renewed, but *as a sinner;* and its main object is to enable him to *see* what he needs, and to lead him by prayer and supplication to ask, that he may obtain. "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus, for the remission of sins;" *i. e.*, in addition to heartfelt sorrow for the past, make a *public avowal* of your change of mind, "and ye *shall receive* the gift of the Holy Ghost," was the message of Peter to those who had shortly before crucified his Lord; and we have no right to alter it. We are aware that it may be said that the promise refers to *miraculous* gifts; but the context will not bear out any such interpretation, since it was a promise made, not to those alone whom Peter addressed, but to their children, and to all that are afar off, "*even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*"

The mischief that is done by careless and unscriptural statements regarding Divine influence is incalculable, and never greater than when such views are made, as they constantly are, a ground of apology for *sinful* ignorance; as if it were the work of the Holy Spirit either to give a new *faculty* to the mind, or to furnish it with *new light*, without which its perpetual darkness is certain and irremediable. The "fruit of the Spirit," says St. Paul, "is love, joy, peace, long-suffering," and such like; but where are we told that it is mental power, clearness of understanding, ability to com-

prehend, or, sad to say, as Dr. Chalmers has incautiously put it,—what the telescope is to the naked eye, or what reason is to an idiot?*

That *love* in its result, is as *enlightening* as it is purifying, no one will dispute; for sympathy is the great quickener of the perceptions, and purity the chief refiner of the intellect; but it is a gross perversion of these sacred truths to reverse their lesson, by making a sovereign gift of God essential to a knowledge of any duty, for the non-exercise of which man is justly held to be responsible.

Do we then, it will be said, *deny* the work of the Spirit? Assuredly we do not. We but maintain that Divine light, so far as it is needful to the comprehension of duty, and, therefore, to the completion of responsibility, is already given to every man. What other intelligible meaning can be attached to our Lord's own words, "I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And *when he is come*, he will reprove (or convict) *the world* of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment" (John xvi. 7, 8)? As well might we deny that "the Lord has risen," as affirm that the Spirit has not been given. Nor can we imagine in what part of Scripture a justification is to be found for the constantly recurring assertion, that the Comforter is given to or withheld from the world, according to the faith or faithlessness, the earnestness or otherwise, of the intercessions of the Church.

So long as errors of this magnitude are taught, either directly or by implication, in almost every pulpit, it is obviously impossible that the Bible can be read as intel-

* Tron Sermons.

ligently as any other book, or the most important part of every man's moral probation—the duty of seeking after truth as the supreme good, in the exercise of humility, candour, and patience—be fully acknowledged.

But this is not all. The notion of a *special light*, of the character supposed, is as *destructive of the Divine record* itself as it is of man's responsibility in rejecting it; for if God, by His Holy Spirit, communicates directly with the minds of men now, *as an interpreter*, such readings are far more likely to *control* than to be subject to words given to mortals eighteen hundred years ago.

So men are beginning to reason. "Are we," it is now said—not by sceptics only, but by Evangelical teachers,—"to bring down the word inspiration to a use merely narrow and technical? asserting it only of prophecy, and other Scripture writings, and carefully excluding from it all participation by ourselves, in whatever sense it might be taken?" Are we to "become a class unprivileged, differing from the anointed men of Scripture and Scripture times,—shut down to a kind of second-hand life, feeding on their words?" Is it to be believed that "*they* were inspired, while *we* in no sense can be? If so, there is no relief for us but in a recoil against inspiration itself, even that of the Holy Scriptures; for who will credit that men were inspired long ages ago, when now any such thing is incredible?" *

The *recoil* thus spoken of as inevitable, finds its expression in those later forms of criticism which are now issuing from

* Dr. Horace Bushnell. It is right to say that Dr. Bushnell adds:—"Not that we are to assert or claim *the same* inspiration with the writers of Scripture. God has a particular kind of inspiration for every man, just according to what he is, and the uses He will make of him." As we are obliged, in this instance, to quote second-hand, we are unable to say in which of the sermons the passage occurs.

our great seats of learning, according to which the inspiration of the first century is to bow before that of the nineteenth; consciousness is to be made the test of truth; the miraculous is to be expurgated; and if, as a necessary consequence, the Bible comes to be regarded as at once true, and yet full of falsehood; pure, and yet defiled by error and prejudice; "Divinely animated," and yet disgraced by fanatical assumption,—the result may be regretted, but it must be considered as inseparable from progress.

The *root* of these terrible errors, whether men will hear it or not, is the *notion*, most tenaciously held by Evangelical Christians, that the Holy Scripture *enlightens* the mind by other means than by the purification of the nature. That it is so, is evident from the ground taken by one of the leading writers in the "Essays and Reviews,"* who boldly asserts not only that "Inspiration is a permanent power in the Church," but that the Bible always supposes in its readers "*an illumination kindred to its own.*" In explaining what he means, he quotes, as an authority, St. Basil, who speaks of the Holy Spirit "as an intellectual light, affording illumination to every *rational faculty* in the investigation of truth;" "the light which clears *mental perplexities*, and the secret energy through which every *organ* discharges its functions aright." In the faith of this doctrine of the indwelling Spirit in the Church, it is asserted, and truly enough, the creeds were developed, doctrine was drawn from doctrine, liturgies were collected, and Gentile customs were adopted.

But what follows? Why, of course, this:—that as "the Comforter at present acts within the bounds of our capacities, leaving us liable to error, and the shortcomings of our

* Dr. Rowland Williams, in "An Earnestly Respectful Letter to the Lord Bishop of St. David's," 1860.

generation," so "it is in harmony with the Divine dealings to suppose that while apostles and prophets enjoyed a larger measure of illumination, they, too, were left liable to shortcomings in knowledge, or humanity *in reasoning*. The argument culminates in the question, "What, then, is the authority of mere *scripturalness* apart from Christ, or *apart from what good men approve*, and *from what fair historians think credible?*" The answer implied is,—Nothing at all.

We lay it down, then, as a fixed principle, that he who would *understand* the Bible must believe *first* that God, in giving it, has not withheld anything necessary for its comprehension, so far, at least, as *present duty* is concerned. Secondly, that to seek to control the inspiration of prophets and apostles, by any fancied inspiration of our own, is a miserable delusion; and *thirdly*, that *as a consequence*, whether we approve or not, *we must either feed on the words of men who wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost eighteen hundred years ago*, or wither in our pride; and this, not because "the apostles and Scripture writers are set between us and God to fence us away," but because the action of the Spirit of God on man, when not exercised miraculously, as at the planting of the Christian Church, and as in the case of the apostles and inspired writers of Scripture, is on the moral nature only, and *never directly* on the intellect; that the Holy Ghost enlightens, not by a process of addition, but rather by one of subtraction; not by giving to the intellect any light or power of which it would otherwise be deprived, but *by removing moral obstacles* to its free and healthy action.

The contrary view, although generally maintained, destroys all tangible distinctions between inspired and uninspired communications; favours mysticism; lowers the

authority of the written Word; and justifies, so far as anything can do, *the most fanatical* interpretations of Scripture. For it is evident that if a man's understanding of Holy Writ depends on anything else than the right use of the faculties God has given him (which of course implies their non-perversion by dislike and prejudice), the Bible cannot be regarded as occupying the same position as any other book, but must be interpreted by a light which, try to explain it as we may, can never be more or less than *a personal inspiration*, in which case, as related to any written document, its teachings must be *supreme*.

It is both curious and instructive to observe how error changes its form without changing its nature. It would really seem as if Protestants, like Romanists, believed that A DIVINE REVELATION without AN INFALLIBLE INTERPRETER was no revelation at all. Dr. Whately has well shown that this "craving for infallibility, than which there is no more powerful principle in human nature,"—and of which the views we have combated in relation to the Holy Scripture are but one manifestation,—not only "*predisposes* men towards the pretensions, either of a supposed unerring Church, or of those who claim or who promise immediate inspiration," but becomes by consequence, as we have seen, the parent of no small amount of infidelity. It is an error "that falls in at once with men's *wishes*, and with their *conjectures*; it presents itself to them in the guise of a *virtuous humility*; and they readily and firmly believe it, not only *without* evidence, but *against* all evidence."

"To examine and re-examine,—to reason and reflect,—to hesitate and to decide with caution,—to be always open to evidence,—and to acknowledge that, after all, we are liable to error; all this is, on many accounts, unacceptable to the

human mind,—both to its diffidence and to its pride,—to its indolence,—its dread of anxious cares,—and to its love of self-satisfied and confident repose. And hence there is a strong prejudice in favour of any system which promises to put an end to the work of inquiring at once and for ever."

But vain is it to hope that by any such means we can evade our responsibility. What we really want is, that blessed indwelling of the Holy Spirit,—the only influence we are authorized to seek and to pray for,—which is not intellectual, but moral; which is inseparable from candour, love of truth, and obedience generally; which manifests itself in growing sympathy with the Divine character; and which *therefore* involves clearer perceptions of, and a deeper insight into, the Divine mind and will as exhibited in the Bible, than can be obtained in any other way. For, saith the Lord Himself, "To him that *hath* shall be given." And again, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." D.

HUMAN PROBATION.

"Sixpences have to be lost as well as lives, under a sense of *duty*, that the market may have its martyrdoms as well as the pulpit; and trade its heroisms as well as war.

"While many a zealous person loses his life in trying to preach the form of a gospel, very few will lose a hundred pounds in showing the practice of one.

"On due occasions, the soldier must die rather than leave his post in battle; the physician rather than leave his post in plague; the pastor rather than teach falsehood; the lawyer rather than countenance injustice. The merchant and manufacturer —what is his due occasion of death? It is the main question for the merchant and the tradesman, as for all of us. For truly, the man who does not know when to die, does not know how to live."—*Ruskin.*

FORMS OF THOUGHT.

BROAD CHURCH.

THE term, "Broad Church," although of recent origin, and frequently applied in the most vague and unmeaning manner to men of widely different schools of Theology, seems nevertheless to have established a fixed position amongst us. That it will continue to be used as the designation of a certain *class* of thinkers can scarcely admit of doubt. It may not, therefore, be inexpedient to endeavour to ascertain *what* are the precise points of difference which separate Broad Churchmen, *as such*, from other parties either in or out of the Establishment.

We *assume*, of course, that the distinction in question is real, and not imaginary; that the term, "Broad Church," *does* truly represent a particular form of thought capable of being distinguished from those which are ordinarily known as Patristic or Puritan; and that such form of thought is now becoming characteristic of a theological school.

We assume, further, that this school, like all others, has its representatives. And yet nothing would be more absurd than to attempt to name them, or to attribute anything like identity of sentiment to those who are commonly classed under this head. No such union exists, or is indeed likely to be created. On sacramentarian questions they would probably be found to differ widely,—some verging towards Rome, and others towards Geneva. Their respective theories of inspiration, as applied to the Scriptures, would be anything but akin; their views of unfulfilled prophecy,

and consequent expectations as to the future, totally unlike; their sentiments regarding the Jewish Sabbath and the Christian Lord's day by no means the same,—some inclining to the views which are generally adopted by the Continental churches, and others to those of the Scottish Puritans. Further, and more important still, there would be found amongst them almost every diversity of mode in the presentation of Divine Truth either to believers or unbelievers.

Nor is this either surprising or perplexing. The same differences exist among men who avowedly belong to the Tractarian party; and,—although frequently more or less concealed,—are unquestionably characteristic of that large body of the younger clergy who class themselves, or are classed by others, under the general title of Evangelical.

Further, it would be a great mistake to suppose that what are termed "Broad Church views" are confined to the Episcopalians of England. On the contrary, since the decline of the Rationalistic or Neologian party, they have not unfrequently appeared among German theologians, in connection with the deepest piety; and they are certainly spreading in the Church of Scotland, in the Free Church, and among English Nonconformists.

The various attempts that have been made by noisy polemics,—especially since the publication of the Oxford "Essays and Reviews," a volume which is by no means fairly connected with the school in question,—to treat Broad thinkers as if they were, without distinction, profane; as if they were triflers with evangelical truth; as if they were desirous of concealing, under a semblance of piety, a sceptical and unsubdued spirit, have all failed to stop the progress of a movement which is now more than ever needed to correct *one-sided* views of the Gospel; to stem

the tide of infidelity, which is fast rolling in upon us; and to disavow, on behalf of Christianity itself, all sympathy with the intolerance, ignorance, and supercilious pride which so often marks the course of the religious press, as it poisons Christian love in a thousand domestic circles.

If we were asked to express in one word what we regard as the great leading mental and moral characteristics of the "Broad" school, we should reply,—large-mindedness and large-heartedness, with wide and generous sympathies; characteristics which, we doubt not, suggested the name it bears; for to this party belongs the unusual advantage of having been designated by *a friend*.

The breadth of thought to which we refer is chiefly manifested in a generous treatment of Scripture. Men of this school have, for the most part, no *favourite* portions; no one set of texts on which they are continually ringing changes; no belief that this or that epistle, or chapter, or verse, embodies the whole Gospel; no tendency to exalt this or that particular *aspect* of truth at the expense of others; no exclusive faith *in any one form* of presenting the Gospel as better adapted than others to convince or to convert.

Not so is it with the Evangelical party, if we may judge by the fundamental rules of two of the most popular of the societies which are carried on under their control, for the diffusion of the Gospel—the London City Mission, and the Religious Tract Society. The first of these (the City Mission) directs its agents, in reading the Scriptures to the poor, to *select* those portions which bear on the depravity of man; on the justification of the sinner by faith in Christ alone; and on the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. The second (the Tract Society) lays it down as essential that "every

tract and book shall contain a clear statement of the method of a sinner's recovery from guilt and misery by the atonement and grace of the Redeemer." To avoid misconception as to their meaning, the Committee, after expressing the hope that their productions "contain pure truth, uncontaminated with error, and *undisturbed with human systems*," add, as if quite unconscious of the contradiction involved, "by pure truth, when not expressed in the words of Scripture, they refer to the Evangelical principles of the Reformation, in which Luther, Calvin, and Cranmer were generally agreed, and to that *system of doctrine and of scriptural interpretation* which is set forth in 'the Harmony of the Confessions of Faith of the Christian and Reformed Churches,' on all the subjects which are considered as 'chief points of our religion,' and the groundwork of our faith."

The view here taken of what is to be distinctively understood by "the Gospel," whether right or wrong, is clearly *more limited* than a Broad Churchman could approve; for he would probably regard it as *assuming* (although without directly asserting it) that the Epistles are more evangelical than the Gospels; and that a sinner is more likely to be beneficially impressed by definite and Puritan forms of thought than by the unsystematic perusal of the entire New Testament as it stands.

The *moral characteristics* of the two schools are equally distinct. The one, the Broad, is marked by a calmness which frequently becomes cold; the other, the Evangelical, by a warmth that often runs into enthusiasm. The former seems to attach more value to *light* than to heat; the latter to estimate *heat* more highly than light. Among the "Evangelicals," we naturally look for *intensity* of feeling, for their thoughts and emotions are generally concentrated on a few

leading truths; from Broad Churchmen we as naturally expect an *equable* and well-balanced state of mind, since their views are more comprehensive, and the range of their vision more extended.

As a natural consequence, Broad Churchmen are more candid, and have a much keener sympathy with the intellectual difficulties of inquiring minds than, *as a rule*, Evangelical Christians have. On the other hand, they have less ardour, are sometimes deficient in zeal, and certainly act with *less power* upon the multitude.

The one, the Broad Churchman, loves truth *as truth*, and God as the supreme source of all excellence. The other, the Evangelical, clings, with a sort of exclusiveness, to those *forms of truth* which he regards as most powerful to the "pulling down the strongholds of sin and Satan," and loves God chiefly as *his* Saviour, and as *the Redeemer of the Church* from everlasting misery.

Carried away by a burning desire to propagate what he believes to be, in a special sense, "*saving truth*," he is often dogmatic, uncharitable, and unamiable. The Broad Churchman, on the other hand, is always in danger of latitudinarianism. Pursuing his inquiries with a *fearlessness* which is remarkably attractive, he sometimes becomes daring in his speculations, and sets aside old forms of truth too lightly; he rarely falls into the error, so common in some other quarters, of distrusting investigation altogether, and of clinging, with a timidity amounting to absolute terror, to an old confession, as if it were the very essence of inspiration itself.

That Broad Churchism is extending, and will extend, is, as we have already said, our deep conviction. It *must* do so, because it is in harmony with some of the best tendencies

of the age; and because, amid surrounding difficulties and dangers, it has faith in truth, and, therefore, in God, who is the author of all truth. In its course, whatever may be the idiosyncrasies of its living representatives, it will, of necessity, fall back more and more on the simple text of Holy Writ; will gradually emancipate itself from the fetters alike of scholasticism and of ritualism; and it will ultimately do much to promote that healthy reliance on *the whole Word of God*, to which, it is daily becoming more evident, we must exclusively look as the basis of future spiritual progress. E.

INTERPRETATIONS.

No. 13.

ROMANS ii. 12, "*For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law.*"

COMMENTATORS.—"*Without law.*" "Without written law."—(*Haldane and R. Watson.*) "Without a rule of duty."—(*Hodge.*)

"*Perish.*" "Shall be punished according to their light."—(*Hodge.*) "Shall be annihilated."—(*Dodwell and Locke.*) "Shall be dealt with according to the inferior dispensation under which they lived."—(*Doddridge and Adam Clarke.*) "No criticism can make this expression consistent with the salvation of the Gentiles who know not God. Many are inclined to think that the condemnation of the heathen is peculiarly hard; but it is equally just, and not more severe than the punishment of those who have sinned against revelation."—(*Haldane.*)

On these, as usual conflicting interpretations, we beg to observe that they all proceed on the erroneous supposition that the apostle in this verse is declaring the final lot of the heathen. Hence the effort of expositors seems to be, to explain the word "perish" in such a sense as to make it accord with the revealed character of God as "a merciful God," and with the statement made a little further on, that "where no law is, there is no transgression" (iv. 15).

How *hard* the task, no one can fail to perceive. Dodwell meets the difficulty by asserting that "perish" implies *annihilation;* a view very extensively held in the present day. Others (on what authority it is difficult even to imagine) reduce "perish" to *punish or judge*, in greater or less degree. Others, again, insist that "perish" only means *temporarily lost*, since the same word is used in relation to the lost sheep which was afterwards brought home with rejoicing. Mr. Haldane maintains that the eternal misery of those who have never heard of Christ is just. So do men, with the purest aims, first *misrepresent* their Heavenly Father by their *mis-interpretations* of His Word, and then, with a coolness which is inhuman rather than angelic, *justify*, as they think, their Creator; while, in truth, they are only justifying their own mistakes.

The context, as is all but invariably the case, relieves the passage of difficulty.

The OBJECT of the apostle, in this portion of the Epistle, every one admits is plain enough, viz., to bring in all men alike guilty before God (iii. 9, 10); and to show that neither by the deeds of the law, nor in the absence of law, can any human being be justified before his Maker. He shuts up all alike in sin, that all alike may learn their need of a Saviour; *the Jew*, notwithstanding his imagined self-righteousness in obeying law; *the Gentile*, in spite of the plea that he has had no revelation. The one he convicts of having continually violated the law in which he boasts (ii. 17—24); the other he finds equally guilty of offence against the light of conscience and of nature (iii. 13—16). "Therefore," says he, "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight" (iii. 20). Considered in themselves, and *apart from the redemption which is by Christ*, all are alike

exposed to wrath, "for there is no respect of persons with God." "As many as have sinned without law, shall" (apart from Christ) "perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law" (if without Christ) "shall be judged by the law,"—a rule by which all alike are lost.

But now comes the glorious announcement, that "the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, *even the righteousness of God, which is by faith in Jesus Christ* UNTO (or *for the benefit* of) all, and UPON (or *over*) all them that believe; for there is no difference (iii. 20—22). Alford, who, as we have seen, translates εις and επι so differently, adds, "There is no *real difference of meaning*, as the repetition of prepositions to give force is peculiar to Paul." Why not, then, translate them alike? Obviously because the one seems to imply "a benefit" of which the recipient may or may not be conscious, and the other a blessing, with which he who receives it is already "*clothed upon*."

The apostle's reasoning sustains the distinction. For, he argues, if it be true on the one hand that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," it is equally true that all may be "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of *sins that are past*" (sins committed before the death of Christ, see Heb. ix. 15,—Alford), *therefore* the sins of those who had no opportunity *in this world* of believing on Him. This, we are distinctly told, is done "through the forbearance of God." And then, as if anticipating the possible exclusion of the heathen by those who consider *a personal faith here* essential, he exclaims, "Is God the God of the Jews only?

is He not also of the Gentiles? Yea, of the Gentiles also; seeing that it is one God which shall justify the circumcision (the Jew, who had the Divine oracles) BY faith, and uncircumcision THROUGH faith."

Commentators generally content themselves with asserting that the two words, "by" and "through," here mean precisely the same thing. Alford merely says that *too much stress* must not be laid on the two prepositions. But why, we ask, did St. Paul use two distinct words, if he did not mean thereby to make a distinction? The learned Dean says, "εκ" (by) "signifies the *ground* of justification; and δια (through) the *means* whereby the man lays hold of justification, viz., by faith." If this *forced and most unnatural* interpretation be the true meaning, why, we ask again, could not St. Paul have said, "God shall justify the circumcision and uncircumcision alike *by and through* faith"? He *does not*, however, say so, and we believe for this reason, that he wishes to convey the idea that the one class would be justified *by* personal faith, and the other *through* a faith which has yet to be made known to them.

L.

STANDING NOTE.—Whatever may be the *apparent* character or tendency of any Articles found in "THE INTERPRETER," we wish it to be distinctly understood that *they are not intended* to encourage secession either from the Communion of the Church of England, or from any body of Protestant Dissenters. Secession leads by inevitable consequences to sectarianism; and sectarianism we abhor. Our sole aim is to promote such an amount of freedom of thought and liberty of action in church matters, *within* existing bodies, as may best tend to further that true Christian Unity which is *counteractive* of all Schism "in the Body."

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at,—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints, as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine.*

HEAVEN.

(SECOND PAPER.)

HEAVEN, as the abode of Christ, is always and justly regarded as the spot where our "hopes" rest (Col. i. 5), and where that reward is "reserved," which is to be *revealed* in the last time (1 Pet. i. 4). *There* our "inheritance among all them that are sanctified" is deposited (Acts xx. 32); our "treasure" is *there* (Matt. vi. 20; Heb. x. 34); our "names" are "written" *there* (Luke x. 20); our "reward" is *there*

[Registered for transmission abroad.]

BRITISH MUSEUM

(Matt. v. 12); the "crown of righteousness" is *laid up* there (2 Tim. iv. 8); our "conversation" is *there*, "from *whence* also we look for the Saviour" (Phil. iii. 20); but our final home is *not* there; for the "house" with which we are to be "clothed upon," although as yet, by a figure, spoken of as "in the heavens," and declared to be "eternal" in character, is to be a house "*from* heaven" (2 Cor. v. 2); and "the holy city, the new Jerusalem," is to "come down from God *out of* heaven" (Rev. xxi. 10); and the dwelling-place of risen men is to be "*a new earth*," in which dwelleth righteousness (Rev. xxi. 1); and Christ is to return, "For the Lord himself shall *descend from heaven* with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God" (1 Thess. iv. 16); and "the tabernacle of God" is to be "with men," and "*He will dwell with them*, and they shall be His people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God" (Rev. xxi. 3).

That the elect Church, "the Bride," will occupy a position higher than the rest,—nearer to Christ, and more glorious than that of many who will be saved,—we have already seen to be probable, from the statement that such shall be with Christ "*within* the holy city," while others, "saved nations," only dwell "in the light" of it (Rev. xxi. 24); but there is nothing whatever to support the ordinary expectation that, at the resurrection, this material world of ours will be destroyed, and the righteous conveyed to heaven, to be for ever happy among the angels of God, sharing with

them in the services of the upper world. There is far more reason to suppose that the angels will continue for ever to be "ministering spirits" to those who are "the heirs of salvation" (Heb. i. 14).

In all the *speculations* which excellent persons so freely indulge in, about "being happy in heaven"—for, unsupported by Scripture, they are nothing but speculations—the point forgotten is, *the perpetual humanity of man*, so clearly indicated in the incarnation of the Redeemer, and in the fact that He ascended, in His human body, to "His Father and to our Father, to His God and to our God."

To a similar forgetfulness may probably be traced a tendency, now very common, to contemplate future happiness apart altogether from its connection with *locality*.

That there is a sense in which heaven may be *within us* is certain; for where God is, heaven is; and unfettered communion with Him, through Christ and by the Holy Spirit, is perfect happiness. But this is no argument whatever against a locality, as the future residence of the redeemed. God is everywhere, but we cannot be everywhere; and since, *at present*—even were it true that space is merely subjective to the mind of man—we can comprehend the idea only as *a relation*, all the probabilities are that we shall continue to do so; for however glorious may be the spiritual bodies of the saints, however free from imperfection or corruption, however much they may transcend the limitations of our earthly conditions, the

notion of *place* seems inseparable from the possession of a body.

That *the body* will be raised, is the distinct teaching of revelation. That this union of the soul, after death, *with matter*—however spiritualized the new material frame may be—is essential to the re-birth of the spirit into "the new world of knowledge and action," may fairly be gathered from Scripture. That the first consequence of this birth must be "the acquirement of locality in the extended universe," is certain.

The mischief involved in the tendency to think of the future in connection with the spirit alone, and of heaven as merely subjective, commences whenever such interpretations are supposed to include *all that Scripture is intended to teach us* relative to the world to come. Such is certainly *not* the case. Heaven is *there* always spoken of as a locality, the special residence of the Court of the Most High; hell is distinctly revealed to us as *a place* "prepared for the devil and his angels;" and the "new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness," as clearly declared to be the final abode of the "children of the resurrection."

And why should it not be so? Has not God made the world to be inhabited? Hath He not made all nations of men for to *dwell* on the face of the earth? "Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else" (Isa. xlv. 18). The assurance given to man of

sovereignty in it,—a dominion far too absolute to be regarded as fulfilled either in the present or in the past,—alone proves that it is not destined to destruction (Heb. ii. 8; and Psa. viii.). It is "*till the day of Christ,*" that St. Paul prays the Philippians may be preserved; and it is "*in* that day"—the day of His return, that he is so desirous to "rejoice" (Phil. i. 10; ii. 16).

Further, the world is a *redeemed* world. Christ died to restore all things; to deliver all things from the grasp of the Evil one; and who will venture to say that this design can ever be thwarted? that Satan is able to hinder the world from becoming the dwelling-place of the creature formed in God's image? or that "Wisdom" can be compelled to cease "rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth," and no longer to find "delights with the sons of men" (Prov. viii. 31)?

These views, so far as they relate to the probability of this world becoming, when purified by fire, the future abode of man, are not new. Dr. Chalmers, in his "Astronomical Discourses," supports them with all the argument and eloquence of which he was so distinguished a master; and Mr. Isaac Taylor, in his "Physical Theory of Another Life," in arguing against the unreasonableness of imagining "that the future government of God, instead of being carried forward, as now, by independent and intelligent agencies, shall proceed by the interposition of His immediate power, while the creatures stand aloof as idle spectators of omnipotence"—observes, "It would not be very difficult to show in

what way probably every one of the active qualities, moral and intellectual, which are now in training, may come into exercise within a future system, even although that system should exclude the necessities and pains of the present state. All the practical skill we acquire in managing affairs; all the versatility, the sagacity, the calculation of chances, the patience and assiduity, the promptitude and facility; as well as the higher virtues which we are learning every day, may well find scope in a world such as is rationally anticipated when we think of heaven as the stage of life that is next to follow the discipline of earth."

"With no other indication of the destinies of the universe than what may be furnished by the swelling emotions of pity that are now working, pent up in tender and noble hearts, we should hardly fear to err in assuming that a sphere will at length open upon such spirits, wherein they shall find millions needing to be governed, taught, rescued, and *led forward from a worse to a better, or from a lower to a higher stage of life.* It is quite as easy to suppose that the Creator should have imparted to human nature the notion and the desire of immortality, without intending to realize it, as that He should have instilled a boundless benevolence, which is to have no more opportunity to express itself than it may chance to meet with in the present state."*

We add,—And *who* so likely to be the objects of

* "Physical Theory," p. 190.

this benevolence as those who, on earth, have never been under any government deserving of the name; who from birth upwards have been abandoned to ignorance, superstition, and vice; and who wait only for a wise and kindly hand to lead them from evil to good, and from self to Christ?

The main difficulty in the way of impressing these truths upon mankind arises from the false associations that are commonly thrown around matter, and from the old Manichean error of supposing it to be in itself impure. We forget that when God first framed the body of a man, He pronounced it "very good;" that God walked amid "the trees of the garden;" and that it was in his material dwelling-place that Adam originally enjoyed unclouded fellowship with his Maker. We forget that there is no essential connection between materialism and sin; that it was over the *material* world that "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy;" that it is the material and visible "heavens" that "declare the glory of God;" that if the body were indeed nothing better than the prison-house of the soul, Divine love itself would hinder the possibility of its resurrection; that it is the substitution of righteousness for sin, of the pure for the vile, of love for selfishness, and not of spirit for matter, that will distinguish the new economy; for its special and distinctive mark is simply this,—

"A NEW EARTH, WHEREIN DWELLETH RIGHTEOUSNESS."

A.

SCRIPTURE.

Chap. IV.—*On Hindrances which arise from confounding Facts and Inferences.*

THUS far we have treated the Bible simply as *a Book*, and altogether irrespective of the particular truths it is supposed to contain. We now proceed to deal with impediments to its comprehension which spring up in our path *after* we have fully recognized the authority of the revelation, and are prepared to study Scripture as a Divine repository of truth, intended for our practical guidance and spiritual advancement.

The first to which we would draw attention, is that which arises from the confusions engendered by mixing together facts and inferences.

We are quite aware that an illustration or two will be needful to render the distinction we are drawing intelligible to ordinary readers, for popular attention has not been much directed to this point. Few are probably aware of the extent to which, in the exposition of Scripture, facts and inferences are blended; or how frequently, by this process, that which is merely *human* is, by theologians, placed on a level with that which is Divine. Few remember, that while theology is "the science of inferences," the Bible is merely a revelation of facts.

But it is necessary, before proceeding further, to explain what we mean by a Scripture fact. And perhaps we cannot do this better than by calling attention to the following

passage, which occurs in Robert Hall's well-known sermon on "the glory of God in concealing a matter."

These are his words: "The revelation contained in the Scriptures extends only to FACTS; not to the theory of these facts, or their original causes. The most important truths are communicated in a dogmatic, not a theoretic, manner. We are taught, on the testimony of Him who cannot lie, *insulated facts*, which we cannot connect with those reasons with which they are undoubtedly connected in the Divine mind. They rest solely on the basis of Divine authority; and we are left as much in the dark with respect to the mode of their existence, as if they were not revealed."

A SCRIPTURE FACT, then, is to us *a revealed truth*, dogmatically communicated; resting solely on the basis of the Divine authority; and viewed apart from any *reasons* for its proclamation, or any *deductions* which may be drawn from it. And this, be it observed, whether that which is revealed be *an event*, or whether it be what is usually termed *a doctrine*.

By AN INFERENCE we simply understand *a deduction* from some revealed truth. Such deduction may be right or may be wrong; for it is, at best, but the result of a process carried on by a finite mind, dealing with that which has relations to the Infinite.

The following examples will show what we mean:—

(1.) "*Jesus looked round about, and saith unto His disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God*" (Mark x. 23); using the term, "riches," apparently in a very extended sense, and applying it, probably, to all who, having full barns and provisions laid up for many days, were likely to forget their dependence on

Him from whom they received their daily bread. This saying of our Lord's we call THE DIVINE FACT.

The apostles, "astonished out of measure, said among themselves, Who then can be saved? or, How few will be saved!" That was THE INFERENCE they drew; and it seemed to them a necessary, nay, an unavoidable one.

The Lord practically replies, Your finite minds are not capable of dealing with matters which have relation to the Future World, when He adds, "*With men* (or, according to the deductions of human reason from my words) *it*"—an extended salvation—"*is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible*" (ver. 27).

(2.) Jesus, according to the narrative of the evangelist (Matt. xxviii. 19), meeting the eleven on a mountain in Galilee soon after His resurrection, spake unto them, saying, "*All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in* (or into) *the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*" This is THE SCRIPTURAL FACT; and since "all nations" meant the Gentiles (for their work among the Jews had for some time been going on), whosoever goes to heathen lands, or among any people where "the Father" is not known, as revealed in "the Son," and ever-present by "the Holy Ghost," and there teaches, and baptizes his converts, obeys the injunction. He baptizes them into the belief of the one God, revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; just as John baptized the Jew into the belief that Messiah was at hand; and as the apostles baptized both Jews and Gentiles into the belief in a triune Jehovah.

THE INFERENCE, now all but universally drawn from this fact, is, that therefore baptism is to be administered, either

to infants, the children of Christian parents, who come into the world under the relationship in question (for, says the apostle, "now," *i. e.*, by their birth, "are they holy;" meaning, by the term, they are no longer in the condition of the heathen,—1 Cor. vii. 14); *or* to adults, on their profession—*not* of the Christian faith, that would be intelligible —but of a supposed *quickening of the spiritual life*, by virtue of which they claim to be recognized in a new capacity, that of living members of the living Head; the *theory* being that, until this change takes place, men, however virtuous, and however firmly believing in Divine revelation, are, in the sight of God, *heathen*.

Now, it is simply because the views of each party in the controversy between Baptists and Pædobaptists, rest *merely on inference*, neither being able to furnish a single scriptural example *in point*, that division in relation to it has become permanent, and reconciliation hopeless.

Who does not see that, if the question is made to rest entirely on Scripture, *it is quite possible* that both parties may be wrong; since, for anything that appears to the contrary, baptism might be intended to have relation *only* to persons, whether Jews or heathens, *entering* into the Christian church, and so first recognizing, *by a public act, with all its attendant risks*, their belief in God as their Father, revealed in Christ, and ever present by the Holy Spirit? That such a profession carried with it, as a matter of course, the baptism both of slaves and children, we do not for a moment doubt, since the household was then subjected to the head of it, and would be immediately brought under Christian instruction.

Surely, in a controversy carried on under such conditions, *forbearance* is a primary duty, and *candour* in judging

others an imperative obligation. Far be it from us to imagine that God is displeased, either when parents dedicate their *children*, or adults *themselves*, to Him and to His church by baptism with water; but surely it is highly offensive to Him for brethren in Christ to question each other's honesty, when conclusions adverse to their own, in relation to any such obligation, are arrived at.

(3.) St. Peter teaches most distinctly that Christ "*hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God*" (1 Pet. iii. 18); that "*His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree;*" that "*by His stripes we are healed*" (ii. 24); while St. Paul, with equal distinctness, asserts that Christ "*redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us*" (Gal. iii. 13); the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, that "*without shedding of blood there is no remission*" (ix. 22); and our Lord himself, that "*the Son of man came to give His life a ransom for many*" (Matt. xx. 28).

These are the great revealed FACTS on which the doctrine of the Atonement rests; and happy is he who, receiving them in the spirit of a little child, believes and lives.

The INFERENCES ordinarily deduced are various, and commonly relate rather to *the philosophy* of the Atonement than to the fact of its having been made. They are such as these,—(1) God *could* not, in accordance with His *justice*, have accomplished the salvation of man in any other way. (2) Christ propitiated God's *wrath* by His blood. (3) Christ was *punished* in order that law might be satisfied, and so God be free to pardon; and such like.

Now, it is quite clear that these and all similar *inferences*, whether right or wrong, are of little value compared with

the fact to which they refer; since a man may honestly hold *all* that Scripture reveals as to "the necessity" of the sacrifice of Christ, both for the satisfying of the Father and for the salvation of mankind; all that is *really* included in such terms as "propitiation," "oblation," "satisfaction," and "sacrifice" (so far as Scripture informs us what these terms include), without feeling himself at liberty to accept any one of the conclusions we have enumerated. Why, then, should I call my brother an unbeliever, if he is unwilling to admit the inferences I, perchance, may feel obliged to draw? Why should I withdraw from him as heretical?

True it is that *many*, when first awakened to a sense of the evil of sin, and to its penal consequences, can find peace only in such a contemplation of the cross of Christ as is involved in the thought that He, as the substitute for the sinner, *literally* bore the penalty of our transgressions. But this is rather the result of particular teaching, than the natural impression left by Scripture. And if it be equally true, as it unquestionably is, that there are others who "habitually dwell much more on the sad fact of their natural alienation from God than of their exposure to His condemnation; who contemplate far more frequently the holiness and love of their heavenly Father than His justice or His threatenings;" and who, therefore, only see in Calvary *a transcendant mystery*, before which they bow with awe, rather than rejoice with trembling, who shall justify us in concluding that to such the Cross is of none effect? God forbid that we should consent, for a moment, to stake the great verity of man's redemption on any particular mode of explaining either the principle on which it rests, or the process by which it is accomplished.

(4.) Christ explicitly declares, in the Gospel, that He has a Church given Him of God, for whom, exclusive of the world, He on one occasion prays (John xvii.); and St. Paul speaks distinctly of such persons as "elect," and "*chosen in God before the foundation of the world*" (Ephes. i. 3—5). These are SCRIPTURE FACTS, and to deny them is to fly in the face of the clearest revelation.

The INFERENCE deduced by some is, that God has "foreordained the rest to dishonour and wrath, to be for their sin inflicted, to the praise of the glory of His justice" (*Assemb. Cat.*, Q. 13). By others, holding different views regarding human freedom, the conclusion is, that although "all" are called, in a sense which leaves them without excuse for not coming to Christ, only "the elect," or, as some would put it, "few," will be saved; since, however free the human will, the resistance of the depraved heart is never overcome except by *special* grace. In either case the inference, *being purely human*, is of small value; for who can tell whether both may not be altogether erroneous, and experience prove that the doctrine of election perfectly harmonizes with a much more extended salvation? The truth is, that nothing short of a new revelation could substantiate half the conclusions of theologians.

But let us not be mistaken here. We are not denying the propriety of drawing inferences at all, for the process is a mental necessity; reason itself must depart before we shall cease to deduce one truth from another. Neither are we seeking to support the extravagance of those who will not admit any doctrine to be Scriptural which is not expressed in Scripture language; for every one knows that a mere string of texts may be made to prove almost anything. We are simply urging the importance of separating

the fact, whatever it may be, from the inference ordinarily deduced therefrom; and so of escaping the folly involved in giving to the one an authority, which belongs only to the other. The one (the scriptural fact) we hold to be Divine, and, therefore, authoritative; the other (the inference), however probable, is but human, and has, therefore, no right to lay claim to anything beyond *probability*. The inference may be more or less reasonable, and, therefore, more or less likely to be true; but it can never justly be urged upon any man's conscience as "necessary to be believed."

The opposite supposition forms the basis on which all the creeds, formularies, and confessions of Christendom build their huge pretensions. The Church of England and the Church of Scotland, and we believe all the Continental Churches, alike hold that the articles of faith, which are to be regarded as "requisite, or necessary to salvation," are not only "what is *read* in Holy Scripture," but "what may be proved thereby." The Church of England, therefore, binds her ministers to declare that the three creeds, "the Nicene, the Athanasian, and that which is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed" (Art. VI. and VIII.); while the Church of Scotland, the Free Church, and Presbyterians generally, impose a confession of faith, the length and breadth and assumptions of which are perfectly astounding. The *reason* given for the imposition is the same in all cases, because "*they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture.*"

We are, of course, writing only for Protestants, who hold, or profess to hold, in utter abhorrence the Romish notion that a Bible, even at the best, is but "a vulgar and imperfect vehicle of truth; that doctrine is treasured up

far more sacredly in the bosom of the priest, and far more safely dispensed by oral communication; that tradition must explain the New Testament; or that creeds possess an authority independent of the Scriptures." And it is with this protest fully in view, that we lay it down as a cardinal rule in the study of the Bible, that Scripture facts, and inferences deduced therefrom, are never to be confounded; that Christian verities must always be carefully separated from theological propositions; that no human deduction from Scripture, however venerable by age, or however honoured by the support of great names, is ever to be insisted upon as if it were a matter of Divine revelation; that Scripture truth, and human expositions of it, are on no account to be placed on the same level; that the doctrines of God's Word must always be distinguished, by the broadest line of demarcation, from the commandments of men, however wise or good such commandments may be.

It was the neglect of this great principle which led to the formation of that vast system of logical theology which, like Rome itself, has survived the wreck of empires, only to form the greatest of all obstacles to the union and peace of the Church of Christ; and to become the chief cause of the infidelity which now so frequently finds a home in the minds of speculative men.

To class our human interpretations of religious truth, our inferences from it, or our formulas in expressing it, with the great revealed facts on which such truth alone rests, is to sap the foundation of all intelligent belief, and to betray the Gospel with a kiss. It is so, because it confounds the essential with the unessential, makes both doubtful, and so destroys all hope of attaining to *certainty* in religious truth.

D.

FORMS OF THOUGHT.

THE "POSSIBLE" GOSPEL.

"THE only possible Gospel of the nineteenth century," according to Mr. Carlyle, is, "Know your work, and do it;" an axiom which he is forced to adopt, from a conviction—far too hastily arrived at—that everything relating to God is unknown to us; that all discussions on Divine truth are but "dust-whirlwinds;" that the old faiths have died out; and that our beliefs, instead of being, as they once were, the mightiest of powers, are now mere lifeless and meaningless "shams."

We reject altogether Mr. Carlyle's conclusion that God cannot be known, and that consequently search after Divine truth is vain; yet we are obliged to admit that there is *very much* in the aspect of religion amongst us calculated to support the opinion that faith, in its higher sense, *is* to a great extent dying out; that far too many of our professed beliefs are *utterly unreal;* that TRUTH, for its own sake, is now little cared for; and that *the trust* which our fathers, with all their errors, reposed in the Invisible alone, we have transferred to active effort and improved machinery for doing good.

In this sense, and to this extent, Mr. Carlyle is justified in saying, *not* that "the only possible," but that the only *living* Gospel of the nineteenth century is, "Know your work, and do it."

We come to this conclusion, because we cannot fail to

observe that religious insincerities* now *trouble but few consciences;* that mere verity is, in and for itself, accounted but of small value; that in the interpretation of Scripture

* *Religious Insincerities.*—If Anglican bishops of the Evangelical school, who have spent the greater part of their lives in preaching that the grace of the Holy Spirit is a Divine and sovereign gift, startle us by professing, in some non-natural sense, to *communicate* the Holy Ghost to the youthful candidate for ordination (*Ord. Service*), Presbyterian church officers, whether Established or seceding, shock us no less by asserting (again in a non-natural sense), that "the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed" *unto them*, "by virtue whereof *they* have the power respectively to retain and remit sins; to shut the kingdom against the impenitent both by the word and censures, and to open it unto penitent sinners by the ministry of the Gospel, and by absolution from censures, as occasion shall require" (*Conf. of Faith*, Ch. XXX.). If Episcopalians sometimes seem to *lull men into security*, by services which extend hope for the departed, not only beyond its scriptural limit, but equally beyond what is constantly taught in their pulpits, Presbyterians, whether bond or free, as often drive men *to Antinomianism or to despair*, by the assertion (not one-half of those who thus teach believing it) that God, having chosen some to eternal life, "has pre-ordained the rest" to eternal misery; and that even they who have never heard the Gospel "cannot be saved, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature" (*Larger Cat.*, Q. 13 and 60). And if Churchmen are fairly open to the charge of trifling with their subscriptions, because, while one class is Tractarian, and a second sceptical, a third use "offices," which they habitually controvert in their sermons, it must in candour be admitted that even Congregationalists, when called upon, *as they sometimes are*, to subscribe a creed, feel obliged to do so with the proviso that the articles signed do not express "the whole truth,"—that "theologic systems are not God's word, and therefore cannot command our faith."—(*Reynolds' Address at Cheshunt Coll.*, Oct. 9, 1860.) That *among all parties*, for many years past, the most serious deviations, from what is popularly called Orthodoxy, have been habitually concealed in the pulpit by the use of vague phraseology, lest a reputation for "soundness" should be destroyed, will scarcely be denied by any observing man (*See Foster's Corr.*, Letter ccxxi., p. 416). *All* these things we feel obliged to class under the general term of *religious insincerities.*

known solutions of difficulties are every day disguised, from mere cowardice; and that, in the *application* of revealed truths to social intercourse, to trade, to political economy, or to statesmanship, it is openly maintained that "counsels of perfection" cannot be expected to regulate or to control the exigencies of daily life.

And if we ask *how* all this can be, and *where*, under such circumstances, Christian men can look for repose and satisfaction?—the answer is, "They seek and find it" in the only living Gospel of the nineteenth century—"Know your work, and do it."

Nothing, indeed, is more characteristic of the present day, or more remarkable, than the fact that *everywhere* activity now appears as the antagonist of truth; that the less pleasure men experience in meditation on *the true*, the more they find in the performance of what they suppose to be *the right;* that the greater the embarrassment any one feels in the contemplation of his position, whether lay or ecclesiastical, the more cordial and grateful is his attachment to the church or the institution which opens to him a field of plain and practical usefulness. The position may be a false one, but the practical duties it involves are both real and pressing; and in the earnest fulfilment of these the doubter soon ceases to be either consciously dishonest or singularly unhappy. The *result*, however, is a tendency on all sides to think lightly of a want of harmony in religious services between "the words of the mouth and the meditations of the heart."

The effect *upon the Church* of this state of things is, without doubt, in many respects disastrous. It *lowers* the tone of moral feeling within its borders, we were about to say, to the standard of ordinary life—but this would be far

short of the truth; it depresses it to a level *below* that which prevails among honourable men in secular matters; destroys that quick susceptibility to the approach of evil which was once thought to mark the spiritual man; and, *more than anything else*, it tends to eradicate the only line worth caring for which should separate the Church from the world. The late Mr. Robertson, of Brighton, perhaps unconsciously shadowed forth the natural and all but necessary result of this tendency, when he complains that, "in English society, men of prayer and religiousness are now, for some reason or other, oftentimes singularly deficient in masculine breadth and strength, and even *truthfulness of character;* with no firm footing upon reality, no daring to look the real problems of social and political life in the face, but wasting their strength in disputes of words, or shrinking into a dim atmosphere of ecclesiastical dreaminess, unreal and effeminate."

Lamentable, however, as these things are, it does not thence follow, as some would have us to believe, that the religion of England, with all its respectability, is but "an organized hypocrisy;" or that its teachers are consciously false, either to themselves or to others. If things were so, the entire moral character of the class would speedily break up; and instead of being, as such men frequently are, the most devoted and self-denying of labourers, they would soon become manifest to all in their true character, as mere selfish hypocrites. It is a pitiful philosophy, to give it no harder name, which can believe that the noblest of our race are actuated by the meanest of motives, or that a life of painful self-sacrifice is consistent with the practice of conscious deceit.

But how, it will be said, comes it to pass that in theo-

logical matters men are, or *at least seem to be*, less conscientious than they are in secular matters? That he, whose slightest word would, in relation to any affair of this life, be as stringent as his bond, should so often, to all appearance, tamper with truth in relation to his creed?

We believe that several reasons may be given for this. The first will be found in the transcendental character of the statements embodied in creeds. Men feel that the thing subscribed to—whether it be the supposed official imparting of the Holy Ghost by the bishop; the remission or retention of sins; the sacramental threat of "divers diseases and sundry kinds of death" to the unworthy recipient; the doctrine of baptismal regeneration; that of the reprobation of all but the elect; or that of the eternal sensitive torment of the unregenerate—is a profound mystery; admitting, it may be, of more or less explanation on various and usually conflicting theories, but *essentially beyond human comprehension*, and, therefore, not properly the subject of belief or unbelief, in the sense that belongs to any clearly defined and well understood truth. Coleridge somewhere says, and it is a most philosophic observation, that "the mind rests before a difficulty, once confessed insoluble, as calmly as before the most undoubted truth." The question of honesty or dishonesty, in relation to the holding of such dogmas, therefore rarely, if ever, comes before the mind. Men in such a condition argue, as all high-minded sceptics do, that where *certainty* as to revealed truth is unattainable, the proper course to take is, to silence doubt by *active devotedness* in the work God has given them to do.

A *second* explanation of what so often appears to be trifling with integrity, in subscription to a creed, may be found in the uncertainty which attaches to the *meaning* of

words, which have always been, and probably always will be, understood differently by different men. It is this which occasions their being so often regarded rather as "badges of consent and good understanding," than as laws over belief or opinion. "It is remarkable," says Dr. Bushnell (himself unconnected with any established church), "with what ease a man, who is sensible of the fluxing nature and significance of words, may assent to almost any creed; and that *with a perfectly sincere doubt* whether he does not receive it in its most interior and real meaning, that is, whether, going back to the men who made it, taking their stand-point, and abating what belongs to the form of a truth in distinction from the truth itself, he does not come into the real senses or interior beliefs they clothed in these forms."

We are far from *defending* this kind of reasoning, for a robust truthfulness of spirit puts it all to the rout; but it is *sincere*, though sickly; and it may be accepted *in explanation of*, although it can never justify, the course so many take in the matter of subscription.

The insincerities we lament, for such they undoubtedly are, may admit of further explanation on principles which, *more or less acted upon by all of us*, have lately been avowed and defended by the Regius Professor of Greek in Oxford, with singular candour and frankness.

He says, nothing can be more certain than that "in daily life cases often occur, in which we must do as other men do, and act upon a general understanding, *even though unable to reconcile a particular practice to the letter of truthfulness, or even to individual conscience.*" It is "hard," he adds, "in such cases to lay down a definite rule; but in general we should be suspicious of any conscientious scruples in

which other good men do not share. We shall do right to make a large allowance for the perplexities and entanglements of human things; we should observe that men of strong minds brush away our scruples."

That *many* Christian men reason in this way, although few may care to avow it, is certain. And not without a certain amount of apparent justification. A *scrupulous* conscience is very seldom a healthy one. The opinions of *good* men, generally, *ought* to have much weight with us in the practical decisions of life. It is every way most *undesirable* to become isolated, and by any step, however conscientiously it may be taken, to disable ourselves from acting with bodies of Christian men, whom we cannot but love. Many a man, who sharply condemns this sort of casuistry in a clergyman, regularly acts upon it in business; and many a devout woman, who habitually expresses her indignation at its influence over a tradesman, bows implicitly to its dictates, when enforced in what she calls "good society."

The truth is, whether we recognize it or not, that the greater part of the morality practised day by day by all classes is *purely conventional*. We all shrink from adopting any course which seems to condemn others; *sometimes*, like American slave-owners, playing our pleasant deceptions off in the face of the plainest truths, and *always* forgetful that we are using an instrument subtle enough and elastic enough to accommodate practical life to any standard which may, at any period, happen to prevail in Christianized society. Thus it is man lowers the heavenly to the earthly; and, whether a preacher or a hearer, too often contrives to depress the Divine law to that which he considers the absolute requirements of ordinary life.

The scepticism of the eighteenth century sprang up in a

soil of this character; that of the nineteenth, destined we fear to prove eventually more desolating than its predecessor, *because connected with far more activity of mind, and a deeper earnestness in relation to life and its responsibilities*, can only be checked by an end being put to the strange contrasts between words and things which now so perplex men; and by a bold and resolute determination on the part of Christian men to cast aside all *unrealities*, and to consent to the freest possible examination of everything that professes to be authoritative truth. At present this is disallowed. "A vast system of evangelical traditions covers, with its ample and penetrating fold, every sphere of religious thought;" and, in effect, absolutely forbids freedom of inquiry *by the devout*. Outside the fold all is wild enough; superstition, scepticism, and the various forms of Pantheism there range at will; but inside, everything is in danger of becoming conventional and insincere.

While things remain in this state, no "Church of the Future," worthy of the name, can find room either for birth or development. E.

ERROR IN LAST NUMBER.

At page 71, line 9, for "by faith *in* Jesus Christ," read, "by faith *of* Jesus Christ," as the Authorized Version. We are obliged to *Veritas* for calling our attention to this error,—which was purely accidental,—although we cannot attach the importance to it that he does.

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[*All communications for the Editor should be addressed to* No. 14, Bartholomew Close, Aldersgate Street, London, E.C.]

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at,—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints, as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine*.

HELL.

WE propose now to inquire into the testimony of Scripture relative to "Hell," and to "Future Punishment." It will be seen, as we proceed, that we do not consider these two terms to be in all respects synonymous.

In the OLD Testament, the word "Hell" (Heb., *Sheol*; Gr., *Hades*), invariably stands either for the grave, or for the invisible world of spirits,—that state in which the soul remains from the time of its

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departure from earth to the Resurrection. "The wicked shall be turned into Hell, with all the nations that forget God" (Psa. ix. 17), is a text popularly understood as referring to the final doom of the ungodly, but such is not the case; it is the sweeping away from the earth, *by death*, of the enemies of God and of His people which is alone predicted. The word translated "Hell" is *the same* as that used by Jacob, when he exclaimed, "Then shall ye bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to *the grave*" (Gen. xlii. 38); the same as that used by David when speaking of his enemies. He says, "Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into Hell" (marg., *the grave*), Psa. lv. 15; the same as that by which Jonah expresses his *burial*, so to speak, in the body of the fish,—"Out of the belly of *hell* cried I, and thou heardest my voice" (Jonah ii. 2).

Denunciations against wickedness, and threatenings of punishment, are frequent in the Old Testament, both in the patriarchal and Mosaic periods, *e. g.*, Job iv. 8; xv. 20—24; xviii. 11; xxi. 30; Psa. v. 5; vii. 11; ix. 17; xxxiv. 16; Prov. xvi. 4, and many others; but in no case is there any distinct reference to the *final* condition of the impenitent. The first three of the passages to which we have referred, seem to relate exclusively to natural retributions; the rest point to punishment at the hand of God; but in none of them is there any clear revelation of a future judgment. *The fact* that God "hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man

whom He hath ordained" (Acts xvii. 31), is itself a special revelation of the New Testament; for although both Jews and heathens expected a retributive future, of some kind or other, they knew not that God had fixed *a special time* for the judgment of mankind; that it should be by and before Messiah; or that it should take place *on earth*. They knew no more than this,—that after death men were happy or miserable according to the character and conduct they had exhibited on earth,—an amount of knowledge with which too many Christians, in the midst of so much clearer light, still seem to be content.

How dim and comfortless these views were, it is impossible not to perceive, from the fondness with which the most pious of the old dispensation clave to life, and from the way in which they speak of the dead as "dwelling in darkness," and as unable to praise God (Psa. lxxxviii. 12; vi. 5; xxx. 9; Isa. xxxviii. 18, 19).

To the Resurrection they evidently looked forward with hope (Job xix. 25—27; Heb. xi. 10—16). They knew that God was "the God of the living" (Matt. xxii. 32), and in the assurance that "all souls live unto Him," they rested in the expectation that the body would one day rise again. "I know," says Martha, that my brother "shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day,"—a conviction which she probably shared in common with other pious and believing Jews.

In the NEW Testament several distinct words, widely different in meaning, are alike translated

"Hell," a practice which necessarily leads to a good deal of confusion in the mind of the English reader. "Hades" is in this way commonly mistaken for "Gehenna," although it really stands only for the separate state,—*e. g.*, "His (Christ's) soul was not left in *hell*" (lit. Hades, εἰς ᾅδου, Acts ii. 27—31). In *one* instance the word is translated *grave*,—"O grave (ᾅδη), where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. xv. 55.) It is THREE times used figuratively; *once* in the sense of abasement,—Matt. xi. 23; Luke x. 15, "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell" (ἕως ᾅδου); *once* for the powers of evil (Matt. xvi. 18), where, speaking of the church, our Lord tells Peter, "The gates of hell (ᾅδου) shall not prevail against it;" and *once* for *the retributive character* of the separate state, viz., where the rich man, who had neglected and despised his brother Israelite, is represented as "lifting up his eyes" in hell (ᾅδη), "being in torment,"—apparently distressed by internal fever, as he asks for water to cool his "*tongue*" (Luke xvi. 24). The suffering is evidently *mental*. The now awakened conscience is doing its fearful work.

It is plain enough, apart altogether from the use of the *word* "Hades," that in this last passage, "Hell," properly so termed, is not intended by our Lord, *first*, because the state described is one entered upon immediately after death, and, therefore, *prior* to judgment; *secondly*, because Dives is regarded as being sufficiently near to Lazarus to converse with Abraham, on whose bosom the beggar is represented

as reclining;* and *thirdly,* because his state of mind is one in which, if penitence is not directly expressed, pity for others is certainly felt. There are manifest in him the *germs,* at least, of a better mind; he is anxious that those whom he loved on earth should be warned, *that they might repent;* conditions which it is certainly very difficult to suppose can apply to the lost in hell.

The word "Hades" (ᾅδης) further occurs FOUR times in the Apocalypse, viz., *once,* where Christ is described as having "the keys of hell (the invisible world) and of death" (Rev. i. 18); *once,* where "hell" (the grave) is represented as following "Death on the pale horse" (vi. 8); *once,* where "hell" (the state of separate spirits) is represented as yielding up her dead "to be judged" (xx. 13); and finally, where "death and hell" (ᾅδης) are represented as being cast into "the lake of fire" (xx. 14). The word "Hades" is *never* used in Scripture to express what we understand by HELL.

St. Peter (2 Epist. ii. 4), using another word, speaks of "the angels that sinned" being "cast down to hell" (ταρταρόω), and "delivered into chains of darkness, *to be reserved* unto judgment," a term probably corresponding to "the deep" of St. Luke (viii. 31), and to the "bottomless pit" of St. John (ἀβύσσος), (Rev. xvii. 8).

* "The Jews, like the Greeks, supposed the place of departed souls to be divided into two parts, contiguous to each other, but separated by an impassable chasm, yet so narrow that they could see and converse with one another."—*Bloomfield.* Our Lord uses this popular belief as a parabolic medium.

"Tartarus" (or the abyss), therefore, would seem to be *to evil spirits*, what "Hades" is to *evil men*.

It is plain, from the whole, that the soul of man, at death, passes into what we usually term "*the separate state*;" that *there* it begins to reap that which it has sown on earth; the righteous,—peace and rest, the foretaste of better things to come; the wicked,—pain and sorrow, the "fruit of their own devices." Whether, as some suppose, believers, dying since the advent of Christ, avoid "Hades," and dwell in some other spot called "Paradise" (Luke xxiii. 43; 2 Cor. xii. 4), or whether, in the instances quoted, "Paradise" stands for that department of "Hades" which is appropriated to the righteous dead, we know not; nor does it seem to us of much importance, since, in any case, they are with their Lord, in a state of happy preparation for the resurrection of the body, to which they look forward as the consummation of their bliss.

In *twelve* other texts of the New Testament, "Hell" is expressed by the word Gehenna (γέεννα), which signifies "the valley of Hinnom,"—a valley of abomination, because *there* children were sacrificed to Moloch, and because it was used as a sort of "common sewer of Jerusalem." Josiah, with the express purpose of degrading it, commanded that all the ordure of the city should be thrown there, with the carcases of dead dogs, and dead men's bones. The dead bodies of criminals were, from time to time, thrown there. These, putrifying, produced worms and other vermin; to prevent any fatal consequences from which, a fire

was kept continually burning.* The word "Gehenna," therefore, obviously implied, to the Jew, all that is degrading and corrupting in connection with death and putrefaction.

It occurs for the first time in the New Testament in Matthew (v. 22),—"Whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire" (γέεννα); it is immediately afterwards repeated in the twenty-ninth and thirtieth verses,—"It is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell;" or, as the same Evangelist gives it in another place (xviii. 9),—"It is better for thee to *enter into life* halt or maimed," with one eye, hand, or foot, "rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire;"—words reported by Mark (ix. 43—47), with the addition, *thrice made*,—"Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." *Seven*, out of the twelve instances in which the word "Gehenna" is used in the New Testament, are, therefore, involved in the consideration of these few verses.

In relation to the first of them (Matt. v. 22), it should be distinctly recollected, that the word "fool" (μωρὲ) does not mean what we understand by that term, but rather "apostate" (see *Alford* on this word); and, further, that "Gehenna," *here*, probably stands only for *capital punishment*, inflicted by the

* 2 Kings xxiii. 10; Jer. vii. 31, 32; xix. 13; Mark ix. 44.—*Bp. Wilson, Holden, and others.*

highest court in Jerusalem, as contrasted with the minor sentences passed by "the judgment," or by "the council."

To understand the exact bearing of the passage, it is necessary to keep in mind, *first*, that in the Jewish law it is stated, that "he who calls his brother, 'slave,' shall be excommunicated; that he who calls him 'bastard,' shall be beaten with forty stripes; while if he calls him 'wicked' (*i. e.*, in the sense of fool or apostate), he may be tried for his life, which was also called, being 'thrust down into hell, or tossed into Gehenna.'"* Further, it should be recollected that there were *three* courts among the Jews,—the court of the twenty-three,—the court of the Sanhedrim, and the supreme court at Jerusalem, each of which took cognizance of crimes according to the degree of guilt involved; *these* were the tribunals to which our Lord referred.

It may, therefore, without any wish to avoid the force of the passage, be fairly questioned whether, *in this particular case*, Christ is speaking at all of the punishments of the future world; whether, in fact, He is not using the term "Gehenna" simply with reference to the actual "Valley of Hinnom" at Jerusalem,—an application of it with which the Jews were thoroughly familiar. It is difficult to imagine that the punishments of time and of eternity would be mingled together, as on any other supposition they must be.

* Quoted from the Talmud by Lightfoot and Schoetgen, and here taken from "The Evangelists and the Mishna, by the Rev. Thomas Robinson."

In the latter passage (Matt. v. 29, 30), the contrast between entering into "the kingdom of God," or "into life," as St. Mark puts it (ix. 45—47), and being "cast into hell," seems plainly to refer to the "Lake of Fire" or "Second Death." Still, the emblematic language of our Lord must not be pushed *beyond* its true meaning, which is certainly done, when the undying worm and the unquenchable fire are made to stand, as they commonly are, either for eternal remorse of conscience, or for unending torture, either in material or in metaphysical flame. This is not only to put our own fancies in the place of revealed truth, *it is directly to contradict Scripture;* for the very words in question are but a quotation from Isaiah, who distinctly applies them, not to living beings, but to dead "carcases" (Isa. lxvi. 24). No supposed good that may arise from terrifying sinners (even if they were commonly alarmed by such statements), can for a moment justify interpretations of this character.

In *two* instances (Matt. x. 28, and Luke xii. 5), where the charge is given,—"Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (γέεννα)," the reference is again unquestionably to the final doom of the irreclaimably wicked. So, also, in Matthew (xxiii. 15—33), where our Lord, denouncing the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees, exclaims, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell (γέεννα)?" it seems quite

plain that it is future and not temporal punishment that is referred to.

In the last instance (Jas. iii. 6), "hell" is clearly put for Satan and the powers of evil:—"The tongue setteth on fire the course of nature, and is set on fire of hell."

Having now examined all the passages of Scripture which speak of future punishment under the term "Hell," or "Gehenna," we proceed to notice those which unquestionably *mean* the same thing,—such as, "the lake of fire," and "the second death."

The term, "lake of fire" (λίμνην τοῦ πυρὸς), is found only in the Apocalypse, in which it occurs FIVE times; *first*, in chap. xix. 20, where "the beast and the false prophet,"—whatever these terms may mean,—are said to be "cast alive into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone;"* *secondly*, in chap. xx. 10, where "the devil," that deceived the nations,—in distinction, let it be observed, from *the people* he had deceived, who are "devoured" by fire "out of heaven" (ver. 9),—is represented as being "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever;" the *third* instance is in chap. xx. 14, where "death and hell" (ᾅδης) are "cast into the lake of fire;"

* Like every other *symbol* of the Apocalypse, this is clearly taken from the Old Testament. The entire text is as the voice of Daniel,—"I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame" (Dan. vii. 11).

the *fourth* is in the fifteenth verse, where it is said, "Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire; and the last in chap. xxi. 8, in which we are told that "the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, *i. e.*, deceivers (of course, only if unrepenting,—for 'such were some of you,' 1 Cor. vi. 11), shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone."

As we have already seen, the precise term, "lake of fire," is found only in the Apocalypse; but a similar phrase, "furnace of fire" (κάμινος), occurs in one of the Gospels (Matt. xiii. 42—50), where our Lord tells His disciples, that "in the end of this world, the Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things (or, as it reads in the margin, all *scandals*) that offend"—*i. e.*, hinder the progress of truth,—"and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

"The term, "second death," is also confined to the Apocalypse, where it occurs FOUR times,—*twice* (viz., Rev. xx. 14, and xxi. 8) in connection with "the lake of fire," which is distinctly said to be "*the* second death;" *once* (chap. ii. 11), in the epistle to the Church at Smyrna, where it is declared that he "who overcometh (*i. e.*, endures to the end, in the midst of fiery persecutions) shall not be hurt of the second death;" and *once* in chap. xx. 6, where "the second death" is

said to have "no power" over the partakers of "the first resurrection."

St. Paul, however, probably *means* the same thing, when he tells us that "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. vi. 23); and that if we "live after the flesh" we "shall die" (viii. 13). So, probably, does St. Peter, when he speaks of apostates, to whom "the mist of darkness" is reserved for ever (2 Ep. ii. 17); as also St. Jude, when he writes of those to whom is *reserved* "the blackness of darkness for ever" (v. 13). The declarations of our Lord, already referred to (Matt. x. 28; Luke xii. 5), and others, such as, "He that believeth not the Son,"—*i. e.*, he who deliberately rejects Him, having had all requisite means for knowing and loving Him,—"shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on Him" (John iii. 36), can scarcely admit of any other interpretation. A.

(*To be continued in our next.*)

THE SEPARATE STATE.

"THE spirit is then (when freed from the body), to be thrown upon the play of its AFFECTIONS, whether these be benign or malign—pure or depraved; and it is, moreover, to be thrown upon them in presence of objects of the most stupendous magnitude. In place of the measured and mingled emotions of the present life there are to be encountered in the next stage of our existence, excitements of overwhelming force; and all of one quality. And amid them the soul—quiescent in regard to what might move it to wonder or terror, is to be nakedly sensitive to the MORAL QUALITY of what it beholds. Human nature, thus reduced to its most simple element, shall exist in one mood only—that of AN INTENSE CONSCIOUSNESS OF ITS OWN MORAL CONDITION."—*Saturday Evening.*

SCRIPTURE.

CHAP. V.—*On Hindrances arising from* BIAS, *occasioned by Reverence, Affection, or Interest.*

BY the bias of REVERENCE, we mean the bias which arises from an exaggerated regard for the many great men who have preceded us in the search for truth, and whose conclusions have been received for ages as authoritative. These conclusions, in relation to Scripture, are, for the most part, embodied in the expositions of the Fathers, the Reformers, or the Puritans; they are presented to us in every variety of shape in standard commentaries and other religious writings; they are enforced, in one form or other, Sunday after Sunday, in the pulpits of almost every religious denomination.

An influence of this character is, from its very nature, all but overwhelming; for it is wielded by men who have every claim on our sympathy and respect, and it presses upon us, like the atmosphere, from infancy to age, without disturbing our equanimity. To modest and humble inquirers, who distrust their own ability to judge, and *long for guidance*, it is commonly irresistible, since submission to the decisions of others is by such always regarded as essential to piety. It is supported *from within* by delusions which have long separated lay responsibilities from those of the ministry; it is buttressed *from without* by indolence

and carelessness; it is defended by the pretext that independent research might lead on the one hand to painful doubt, or on the other to irregular zeal. Priestcraft, wherever it exists, always encourages this state of mind, since its pretensions can only be realized to the extent in which the people can be kept in a state of perpetual dependence.

To get rid of this bondage it is only necessary to trace it to its source. The moment we begin to do so our chains fall; for it then appears that with the same devotion with which we follow our pious forefathers, they in turn followed theirs; that the Puritans were really but the pupils of the Reformers; that the Reformers, while rejecting much that had been said and done by the Fathers, bowed with a most surprising obsequiousness before the theological opinions of Augustine; and that Augustine, with all his genius and piety, was so far from being a safe guide, that he notoriously believed in and supported nearly every superstition of his time.

Having thus reduced, as we fairly may, the theological past—so far, at least, as it affects evangelical churches—to the authority of a single great mind, we must deal with Augustine precisely as Lord Bacon dealt with Aristotle; we must subject him *to fact*. In doing this, we shall quickly find that we have the same errors to encounter in theology that Lord Bacon had in philosophy, and that the remedy for the one is the only remedy for the other.

The *errors* in question are of two classes,—*first*, those which belong to THE RELIGIOUS, and which always sum themselves up in the declaration that all that *can* be known of Scripture *is* known; that nothing now remains to be discovered; and that since whatever is new cannot be true,

independent inquiry is useless. The *second* belong to THE SCEPTICAL, who, proceeding to the other extreme, are ever proclaiming, in spite of abundant evidence to the contrary, that the little we think we know is untrustworthy; that the world is really in darkness both as to its past and its future; and that little or nothing worthy of a rational man's confidence can, by any possibility, be made out of the Bible.

The *remedy*, in each case, may find its expression (merely substituting Scripture for nature) in the very words which Lord Bacon uses in reference to philosophy. "Man," he says, "the servant and interpreter, can only understand and act aright in proportion as he *observes* or contemplates God's order; more he can neither know nor do." His favourite phrase is, "We must be content simply to stand before Nature and ask questions." In like manner, the Christian must stand before *Scripture*, and feel that he can do little more than *observe*, and carefully note *its facts*.* Whoever faithfully follows out such a method will soon find, in the words of the great father of modern philosophy, "how wide is the difference between the *idols* of the human mind and the *ideas* of the Divine mind."

But to do this it is absolutely necessary, first, to free ourselves from the vassalage of great names, and then to fear God and take courage. Our progress, when thus left alone to work out truth, may be slow, but it is a comfort to be assured that it is certain of ultimate triumph. Yet not without difficulty. Whoever enters upon this course must lay his account with the endurance of no small share of obloquy; he must be content to suffer for follies and pretensions not

* We have already fully explained the sense in which we use this word.

his own: he must be willing to endure the very natural remonstrances of those who have spent their lives "in reducing theology to order;" and he must be prepared to meet the suspicion which inevitably falls upon every man who is bold enough to disregard the force of prevailing prejudices.

We do not of course pretend that any man *can* now read the Bible as if it had dropt but yesterday from the clouds; nor do we think it desirable that he should do so, even were it practicable. We are not among those who despise the opinions of the wise and good, either of our own or of past times. We rate the laborious researches of many of our commentators, both ancient and modern, at a value above all price. So far as these labourers have tended to promote purity in the text, or thrown light on any matter calculated to render that text better understood, no gratitude can be too deep to be awarded to them. It is with their *inferences* alone we quarrel; and above all, with the dogmatism which would force these inferences on mankind, as if they had a right to stand side by side with inspired truth.

It is the opinion of many, that a new and far more extensive reformation than that which was accomplished in the sixteenth century is at hand. If it be so, the best preparation we can make for its approach will be found in the extension *to truth* of that deeper sense of responsibility which has of late years come over us in relation *to life;* in a growing conviction that he who is "of the truth" only rightly hears Christ's voice; and by a corresponding assurance that truth cannot be reached by any process short of a laborious, self-denying, and independent search for it, in the spirit of the martyr, and under the purifying influence of the Holiest in the heart.

(2) By the bias of AFFECTION we understand that impulse in any given direction which the mind has received, either from early education and training, or from associations connected with the first steps of the spiritual life.

We by no means regard such bias as *in itself* an evil. We are far from denying that truth is, to all of us, a prejudice before it is a personal conviction. We think *with children* it ought to be so. But only during childhood. The passive must in due time be exchanged for the active, and the objective form must become a subjective reality, or that which has been received, however humbly, will not prove of much service in the struggle of life, or be found to stand firm when exposed to the pressure of temptation or doubt. This is emphatically true of Scripture, which must be "inwardly digested," as well as read, before it can come to be a part of ourselves, or, like food, strengthen and sustain us.

At this stage it is that the bias of affection often operates unfavourably. It seems to many of us such a sacrilege to cast aside *anything* that has been sown in our hearts by the bedside of our infancy, and watered by the tears of those whom we can never again behold on earth, that we naturally shrink from undertaking any investigation which we foresee *may* perhaps lead to the breaking up of associations so inexpressibly precious to us. And yet, as we all admit, it must frequently be done before truth can become a reality, or faith in God a living power. It is in such cases that we are made to feel the force of the declaration, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me."

But early instruction is by no means the only form in which human affection is apt to bias the views we take of Divine truth. "A man," says a recent writer, "may have

been converted from a sinful life by hearing an evangelical preacher, or by intercourse with an Anglo-Catholic priest. He is filled with gratitude and enthusiasm, and is eager to communicate to others the blessing he has received. He attributes his conversion to the particular phase of revealed truth which was brought before his own mind,—whether it be a strong feeling of the heinousness of sin, and the doctrine of salvation through the atonement, or whether it be union with Christ through the blessing of the sacraments and the Church. Believing himself to be saved by the influence of these doctrines, he naturally dwells on them almost exclusively, sees them everywhere in the Bible, is blind comparatively to other portions. Hence his bias in interpreting the document which gives him a title to the kingdom of heaven." "This," says he, "I am persuaded, is one principal cause why very earnest men take such different views of the interpretation of God's word,—pure gratitude for salvation received."* Add to this, affection *for the individual* by and through whom the Gospel has been imparted, and love *for the religious community* with which the new convert has been brought into connection,—involving, as it almost invariably does, participation in its prejudices and party spirit,—and we shall then perhaps be able to perceive the vastness of the hindrance thus cast in the way of candid inquiry.

But is there no remedy for this? We think there is,—in the recollection that in all matters of truth and duty the human must bow before the Divine; that God uses all kinds of instrumentality, from the Romish priest to the city missionary, and every shade of doctrine, from the highest

* "Idealism Considered," by the Rev. Wm. Gresley.

Calvinism to the lowest Arminianism, to bring sinners to Himself; and that *therefore* no authority whatever in favour of any particular agency or doctrine can properly be drawn from the mere fact that God has made use of it for the conversion or spiritual awakening of the children of men. Agencies and particular doctrines—regarded as forms of thought, and separated, as such things easily may be, from that which is "spirit and life,"—are at best but *instruments* through which attention is arrested, thought excited, and reflection deepened. *Truth*, as the pabulum of the soul, and *Grace*, as the gift of God to sinful man, are above them all.

(3) The bias of INTEREST is so much meaner in its nature than that of affection, and so much less worthy of respect than that which arises from reverence for great men and past ages, that, however powerful its influence, men rarely acknowledge themselves to be under its sway. And yet, without attributing any special baseness, who can deny that, *as a fact*, "the interpretation of Scripture *has* got mixed up with worldly interests and parties, and passions and feelings, and *is* influenced as much by these causes as the views taken by Radicals or Conservatives of an Act of Parliament, or of an historical document, is influenced by their respective opinions."

To suppose that such influences act only in connection with National Establishments and permanent endowments, is simply absurd. The *property* of Voluntary Associations, as secured by trust-deeds; *income*, likely to be withheld on any material change of sentiment; *status*, in a sect; *trade*, derived from a congregation; *professional connections*, and possible alliances,—all have their weight,—sometimes in deciding the *choice* a man makes of his spiritual home,

and much more frequently in *preventing the adoption* of opinions likely to be offensive, or even distasteful, to others.

Such are the terrible hindrances from BIAS, which now stand in the way of a full and fair investigation as to what is, or is not, religious truth.

But, are we then to conclude that to interpret Scripture like any other book is simply impossible; that every man who is of age to set about such a work must *of necessity* do so, either under the dominant influence of authority or interest, or else in blind subjection to the prejudices of his birth and education? By no means. The same *forms* of truth may not indeed adapt themselves to all classes of minds. They never have done so yet, and they probably never will. It *may be*, for aught we know, undesirable that they should. But, of this we may be assured, that when it pleased God to make known His mind and will to man by and through a book, He meant that book to be understood; that if it is not understood, the fault is ours, and not His; that the hindrances to its comprehension are moral and not intellectual; and that it is impossible for us to say to what extent unity of judgment in relation to its teachings *might* be realized were men but honestly disposed to study its contents with no other object than to ascertain *what it says*. D.

No. 14.

ROM. ix. 13, "*Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated.*"

COMMENTATORS.—"Esau was *justly* the object of hatred before he was born, because he was viewed in Adam as a sinner. Jacob was *justly* the object of God's love before he was born, because he was viewed in Christ as righteous. The whole of the context proves that the declaration has reference to their spiritual and eternal state."—(*Robert Haldane.*) "The Apostle *does not* decide on the eternal state of either of these individuals."—(*Thos. Scott.*) "The Apostle speaks of Jacob and Esau, not in their own persons, but as ancestors; Jacob, the people, and Esau, the people."—(*Matt. Henry.*)

Leaving the commentators to *neutralize* each other, as they commonly do, we turn back to the text, and soon perceive that the true meaning can only be ascertained by reviewing the entire section (chap. ix., x., xi.) in which the passage occurs, and by observing the drift of the whole argument.

The touching lamentation of the Apostle over the moral and spiritual condition of his countrymen,—the children of promise (ix. 4, 5), as compared with that of the Gentiles who had accepted the Redeemer, opens the subject. Over *the conversion* of the Gentiles he rejoices with joy unspeakable; for the *re-instating* of the Jews as God's chosen people he agonizes. He would willingly be "accursed" (*i.e.*, be accounted as reprobate, and lose all the special honour and glory connected with his apostolate), if by such a sacrifice their restoration could be accomplished (1—5).

Not indeed, he says, as if I imagined that *every Jew* had lost his birthright, for "a remnant" are still faithful (6—8); a fact which clearly shows that *the heavenly kingdom* is for those only for whom it has been "prepared." Isaac, Jacob, Esau, and Pharaoh are witnesses to this truth (9—13). Even *before birth*, Jacob was "loved" (ηγαπησα,

i. e., *preferred*, as in Luke xvi. 13, where the same word is used), and Esau was "hated" (εμισησα, *i. e.*, *disregarded;* the same word occurs in Luke xiv. 26, where "hate" evidently means *disregard*).

And now the question is supposed to arise, "Has God *a right*, in accordance with what He has revealed of His own loving and righteous character, to show this preference? (ver. 14). The Apostle replies, God has *always* claimed sovereignty, even to the extent of judicially *hardening* the wicked (ver. 14—17), the *just* punishment of their sin.

Nothing, he argues, is more certain than that *all* the Lord's mercies are sovereign. On whom He will He hath "mercy" (ἐλεῶ, a word *here*, as elsewhere, used, *not* in the sense of saving from punishment, as it is generally understood, but in the sense of conferring benefit). The Apostle uses it in this sense in this very epistle (xi. 31), "by your mercy," *i. e.*, *favour*. So, also, in the Second Epistle to Timothy (i. 16), "The Lord *give mercy* to the house of Onesiphorus." So, also, in Luke (xviii. 38), where the blind man cries for *mercy*, *i.e.*, the favour of receiving sight. How very absurd, then, to read, as most persons do, He *saveth from hell* "whom He will."

The latter clause—"and whom He will He hardeneth" (σκληρύνει, *i. e.*, not merely by leaving them to their own devices, but *judicially*, in order that His purposes may be accomplished), is equally irrespective of future judgment. The "hardening" referred to has evidently no reference to the *eternal* condition of Pharaoh, whatever that may be, since it is effected *for a temporal and special end*, viz., the more abundant showing forth of the Divine hand, in the deliverance of His people (ix. 17, 18).

The next objection anticipated by Paul is, "Why then

doth He yet find fault?" *i.e.*, "Why does he disapprove of *any*, if all alike are but as clay, and moulded as He will?" (ver. 19.)

The Apostle replies, "Who art *thou* that repliest against God?" Is it reasonable to suppose that *you*, a creature, have a mind capable of comprehending the Creator, or are able to judge of all the bearings of *His* conduct? What says Jeremiah (xviii. 6), "Hath not the potter power over the clay, to make one vessel unto honour, and another to dishonour?" (ver. 21), an illustration, be it observed, used by the prophet to exhibit God's right *to change the position or condition* of His people by *degrading* them, as He was about to do, in the sight of all the nations. In the same sense Paul *here* uses it; for he practically goes on to say,—Have not these words of Jeremiah all been fulfilled, and are not we ourselves evidences thereof? For, "If God (there is no *what* in the original) willing to show His wrath (His anger against sin), and (also) to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering" (our fathers the Jews) "vessels of wrath fitted (or fit only) to *destruction:* And that He might make known the riches of His glory," *rejected* them, and *called* us of the Gentiles (ver. 22—24), what shall we say, or how explain such sovereign grace? (ver. 30;—for ver. 25—29 simply embody a parenthetical reference to the older prophets.) The answer is, Because all spiritual blessing cometh by faith, and not by works of law (ver. 30—33).

The tenth chapter is devoted to the exaltation of Christ as "the end of the law for righteousness," and the eleventh to showing that *even then* there was among the ancient people "an election of grace" (ver. 5), which had, by faith in Christ, "obtained" (ver. 7) that which the nation, *as a*

nation, sought for in vain, viz., *supremacy;* they would be among the "kings and priests" of the world to come.

The rest of the Jews are spoken of as "blinded" [marg., "hardened"] *not*, again be it observed, eternally, but *for a time and for an end;* that end, in this latter case, being the calling in of the Gentiles,—their enriching. "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, that blindness in part (or *to a portion*—see Alford) is happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in,"—*then*, "all Israel shall be saved" (xi. 26 to end).

Hitherto the main point of difference among Christians in regard to Election, has been whether the choice of God is only to *external privileges*, or to *spiritual and eternal* blessings. The latter is supposed by many to involve the doctrine of reprobation. If the election were to salvation as opposed to damnation, it certainly *would seem* next to impossible to separate such choice from the predetermined ruin of the rest. But it is not so. Election is to *eternal* blessing without doubt; but it is *to office*, not to salvation. None but the elect can be the "kings and priests" of the "new earth;" but *Christ is the Saviour of the world* (although specially of them that believe, 1 Tim. iv. 10), and none can finally perish save those who deliberately and consciously refuse and reject His great salvation.

L.

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at,—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints, as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine.*

HELL.

(SECOND PAPER.)

AS we are anxious to pursue our inquiry without the slightest regard to controversies, past or present, we shall not,—through fear of being classed with Universalists,—shrink from admitting, that among the very numerous passages in the New Testament which, openly or by implication, speak of sinners as "lost," "destroyed," or "perishing," *many* do not apply to "Hell," or the "second death."

[Registered for transmission abroad.]

BRITISH MUSEUM

The word commonly employed to express "perishing," or destruction (*απολεια, απολλυμι,—perdition*), is a word which is used in a variety of significations. Examples in abundance present themselves. In the Gospel of St. Matthew (ii. 13) *απολλυμι* is used to express the fact that Herod sought "the young child, to *destroy* him." Here it obviously means temporal death. It has precisely the same meaning when the alarmed disciples cry, "Lord, save us, we *perish*" (viii. 25). Further on (x. 6), in the instructions given to the seventy, to "go rather to the *lost* (*απολλυμι*) sheep of the house of Israel," lost evidently stands for persons, *wandering* and *neglected*, whom they were to gather in. In a verse which shortly follows (x. 28), it is plainly put for eternal death,—"Fear Him who is able to *destroy* (*απολλυμι*) both soul and body in hell." In the parables of the *lost* sheep, the *lost* son, and the *lost* piece of money (Luke xv. 6—9), it is employed to describe that which was obviously lost *only for a time*.

When the Apostle writes to the Corinthians (1 Ep. i. 18) that "the preaching of the cross is, to them that *perish* (*απολλυμι*), foolishness," he does not speak of persons who are actually *doomed*, but of those who remain under the dominant influence of ignorance, self-conceit, and rebellion. Again, when he says (2 Cor. iv. 3), "If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are *lost*" (*απολλυμι*), it is obvious that he does not mean persons eternally condemned, nor yet reprobates by a Divine decree, but, as the next

verse intimates, men who were *then* "blinded" by Satan.

The text, "Broad is the way that leadeth to *destruction*" (απωλεια—Matt. vii. 13), is commonly, but erroneously, supposed to be an *authoritative declaration* on the part of Christ that the mass of mankind are ever rushing on to "eternal death." Such an interpretation, however, cannot be justified,—*first*, because our Lord Himself refuses to sanction this doctrine (Luke xiii. 23—30), not, indeed, by directly asserting the contrary, but by calling on the disciples to strive after something higher and better than mere salvation in the sense of deliverance from hell; *secondly*, because this view of the text practically gives the victory to Satan, and directly contradicts the most express declarations of the Word of God (Rom. v. 15—19; xi. 26; Heb. ii. 14); and *thirdly*, because the word translated *destruction* (απωλεια) occurs a little further on (Matt. xxvi. 8) in the sense of *misuse*,—"To what purpose is this *waste?*"

That (απωλεια) is also used to express eternal perdition is unquestionable (2 Thess. ii. 3; 2 Pet. iii. 7; Rev. xvii. 8); but there is nothing in the word itself which could for a moment justify its *invariable* application in that sense. The lesson really inculcated in the passage under consideration (Matt. vii. 13) appears to be, that the mass, *even of professed disciples*,—for it is to these, and *not* to the multitude, that the Lord is speaking,—run to waste; that *few* enter in at "the strait gate," or attain to that blessedness which belongs

to "the Church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven."

But we are anticipating. Our immediate object is to ascertain, with something like precision, what is really the testimony of Scripture regarding "Hell," the "Lake of Fire," and the "Second Death." To this we must, for the present at least, confine ourselves.

Putting, then, all the passages we have quoted together, and viewing them in combination, we seem to learn: *first*, that the terms in question are *exclusively* used to denote *the highest form* of God's vengeance against iniquity; and *secondly*, that "Hell," properly so termed, *admits of no degrees*, either of pain or of continuance,—nothing is revealed in connection with it that corresponds either to "few stripes," or to "many stripes." Yet that "Future Punishment" *is* a thing of degree, Scripture clearly teaches (Matt. x. 15; xi. 22—24; xxiii. 14; Luke xii. 47, 48).

Again, while *certain classes* of men are said distinctly to be in danger of hell (Matt. xxiii. 33), mankind generally are never spoken of as exposed to it,—"Salvation" is not said to be from "Hell," but from "wrath." Further, the *only beings* represented as *tormented* in the "Lake of Fire" (with one exception, which we shall afterwards notice) are "the Devil," "the Beast," and "the False Prophet,"—the two latter, probably incarnated evil spirits. *Finally*, "Hell," though always regarded as a locality, is never, either directly or by implication, said to be the *eternal dwelling-place* of impenitent men, or even put as a

general term expressive of the retribution that will eventually fall on every wicked person; while the doom of those who are at length cast into it is only made known at the conclusion of the mediatorial economy. These particulars we *observe* in the record, and they are certainly worthy of being carefully noted.

We now approach texts which, though they say nothing about "Hell," yet directly speak of future "punishment." The first and most striking of these is found in Matthew (xxv. 31—46), "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." To this passage we must direct very careful attention.

On reading the entire parable, for such it appears to be (see Alford and others), the *first* question that suggests itself is, "*When* is the judgment in question supposed to take place?" There can be no doubt about the answer:—"At the coming of the Lord" (ver. 31).

The *second* inquiry will be, "*To what class* of persons does it relate,—to believers, or to unbelievers?" Is the redeemed "Church of the Firstborn" supposed to be standing there *doubtful* of its doom, and *unconscious* that it had ever lived for Christ? or are the persons in question those who on earth remained till death in ignorance of the Gospel?

The term, "all nations" (παντα τα εθνη), might alone decide the point, since it is always used to describe heathen *in distinction from* Jews. But if this be not enough, let it be further noticed,—*first*, that as the

two parables immediately preceding relate to the sifting of *professed believers*, all probability favours the supposition that the third belongs to a different class; and *secondly*, that Scripture distinctly assures us believers shall not come into judgment (comp. John v. 24; Luke xxii. 30; 1 Cor. vi. 2).

The mere fact of those on the right being called "sheep," and those on the left "goats," proves nothing, since the goat was not an unclean animal. The Paschal lamb might be "a lamb *of the goats*," and the "scapegoat" is generally allowed to be a type of Christ (Exod. xii. 5; Lev. xvi. 21, 22). That the parties before the bar, both good and bad, are "nations" not included in the Church, is evident, not only from the circumstance that the "Bride of Christ" will, at the second advent, *come with* her Lord in the clouds of heaven (1 Thess. iv. 17); but still more from the absurdity of supposing that the elect children of God, who have done everything with reference to Christ and for His sake, can ever reply, "When saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?" Such a supposition removes all reality from the scene. It is easy to say the expressions in question merely indicate humility; but this is not the character of *Christian* humility, which is always, when healthy, conscious of its *true* state. The language of the believer is that of Paul,—"I have laboured; yet not I, but the grace of God that is in me."

A *third* inquiry would naturally be,—"Are the mass of nations before the Judge to be regarded as

then and there divided into two vast bodies, and so disposed of? We think not. For those on the "right hand," as well as those on "the left," are to be "separated," or "severed" (ἀφορίζω) one from another" (comp. Matt. xxv. 32, with xiii. 49). The word used to denote this severance is the same as that by which Paul expresses his own separation from his mother's womb for the service of Christ (Gal i. 15), and the same as that employed in the Acts (xiii. 2)—"*Separate* me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." The "severed" or "separated" persons therefore, whatever their number, are, probably, in each case, comparatively few, since they are men who have either actively *aided* the followers of the Redeemer in times of persecution, or *aggravated* their sorrow by hard-hearted coldness and neglect, which could, of course, only be done by the few.

We are thus taught that persons, alike ignorant of Christ and of His Gospel, are *not*, as we are often told, *all alike* in the eye of God. There are those among them, as among Christians, who have improved the light they had, and there are those who have deliberately excluded themselves from it. Hence this judgment is purely *of works;* and not of works generally, but of one particular work,—that of helping or hindering the people of God when under persecution,—hungry, thirsty, naked, or in prison. The righteous,—doubtless some of the "other sheep not of this fold" (John x. 16),—"Gentiles, which have done by nature the things contained in the law" (Rom. ii. 14),

are commended and rewarded, although they knew not that in aiding "the just" they were aiding the Judge of all; while the "cursed,"—those who from hatred to the light have united with the persecutors, are banished from the Divine presence, although they, too, knew not that in gratifying their evil passions, and opposing goodness, they were opposing One who regardeth His children as "the apple of His eye" (Zech. ii. 8); all which is in exact accordance with the word of our Lord,—"Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only *in the name of a disciple* (*i. e.*, knowing that the man to whom he gave it *was* a disciple, and daring the risk involved in rendering such assistance), verily, I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" (Matt. x. 42).

The "blessed" now "enter" into a "kingdom" (assume government or rule of others,—not merely become subjects), one *prepared for them* from the foundation of the world, where, without doubt, they grow in knowledge, advance in all goodness, learn more perfectly the lessons of Him whom, even in darkness, they have "groped after," and experience the force of the promise, "To him that hath shall be given" (Matt. xiii. 12).

The "cursed" depart into "everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," from which it would seem that *for them* no further probation is permitted. The sentence is clearly an irreversible one. It is distinctly said to be "eternal punishment," (κολασιν, something *inflicted*,) as the antithesis of "eternal life;"

the punishment, therefore, whatever it be, which is elsewhere called the "Lake of Fire" and the "Second Death."

Of the great mass from whom these persons are selected, nothing is here revealed. The parable relates only to *the sifting* of the heathen, just as the two preceding ones related to the sifting of professed believers.

We know the objection that will be taken to this interpretation, notwithstanding it rises so naturally out of the text. Systematic theologians will say,—"Here, then, are men (the sheep on the right hand) saved without faith, and saved, too, for their good works, while the Apostle says, 'Whatsoever is not of faith is sin' (Rom. xiv. 23), and 'that without faith it is impossible to please God'" (Heb. xi. 6).

Our reply is, *first,* that nothing is either said or implied in our Lord's parable (interpret it as we may) about justification by faith; *secondly,* that Scripture does not contradict itself, nor does Paul teach conflicting doctrines; yet he says, that "when Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law," they are dealt with *exceptionally,*—"they are a law unto themselves;" *thirdly,* that since Abraham's faith "was accounted to him for righteousness," it is quite possible that these men's righteousness may be accounted unto them for a faith,—not exercised on earth, because they never knew the proper object of belief, but felt and expressed when that object is revealed.

But it will be further objected, 'This explanation, if correct, leaves us altogether in the dark as to the future condition of mankind *as a whole*,—whether Heathen or nominally Christian.'

We admit it; nor do we think that it was the intention of our Lord here to reveal, what on all other occasions He kept back. Yet we are not wholly left without guidance on this subject. That such persons are *sinners* is, with the word of God before us, unquestionable; that whether with or without a written law, —whether nominally Christian or actually Heathen, they are *justly* exposed to "wrath," cannot be doubted; that they are at present unfit for the fellowship of holy beings, is certain. Yet they are among those for whom Christ died; they are the very "captives" to sin and Satan that He came to deliver. Nor can we believe that His "finished work" is *to them* of none effect. It can only be so regarded on the supposition, —utterly unsupported by Scripture,—that the second Adam came, *not* to repair the ruin involved in the disobedience of the first, but only to render salvation possible to those,—alas! the very few,—who in various ages should on earth be renewed by the Holy Ghost.

This question,—one which certainly ought not to be evaded,—brings us to the consideration of future punishment generally, so far as it can be *distinguished* from the highest expression of the Divine indignation in the final doom of the "second death."

On this point, as might be expected, we find little to help us in the Old Testament; for the few highly

figurative passages which are found in the Prophets, such as the triumphal song which celebrates the overthrow of the King of Babylon,—deceased monarchs taunting him on his entrance into *Sheol* (Isa. xiv. 9—12); or Ezekiel's description of "the strong among the mighty," speaking to the King of Egypt "out of the midst of hell" (*Sheol*—Ezek. xxxii. 21); or Pharaoh seeing the fall of empires, and being "comforted over all his multitude slain by the sword" (xxxii. 31), can scarcely teach us more than that the wicked dead in Hades are, to some extent, under the influence of the passions that enthralled them on earth, and that they are capable of aggravating each other's sorrow.

They can teach us no more, because it is the doctrine of *the resurrection of the body* which gives its peculiar colouring to all the revelations of Scripture touching the future; and this, though dimly revealed to the prophets, was not fully brought to light till Christ himself died, and rose again. Of such phrases as "the immortality of the soul," the Bible literally knows nothing.

We have already referred to the parable of Dives and Lazarus as indicating some important differences between "Hades" and "Gehenna," and we revert to it again, because, coming as it does from our Lord's own lips, it is peculiarly weighty, and it is perhaps the only portion of Scripture in which, so to speak, the veil which hangs over the immediate condition of the dead is lifted, and the *retributive* character of the invisible world made known.

The suffering of Dives, as we have already observed, judging from what he says, is mental,—it seems to arise from restlessness and internal fever, the effect of an awakened conscience. This is confirmed by the fact that the word translated "torments" in the twenty-third verse (Luke xvi. 23) is the same word (βασανοις) that is used by Matthew (iv. 24) to express the "divers diseases and *torments* to which the sick were exposed," and by Peter (2 Ep. ii. 8) to denote the suffering of "just Lot *vexed* (εβασανιζε) with the filthy conversation of the wicked." In both cases it is used to express the natural working out of law acting retributively either on the body or on the mind.

In the following verses (Luke xvi. 24, 25) another word is used for "tormented" (οδυνωμαι), which is in the same gospel elsewhere translated "sorrowing" (Luke ii. 48), a phrase which very naturally expresses what we may reasonably suppose to be the rich man's state of mind. And here we would especially call attention to the fact, that in each of these instances the word translated "torment," means something very different from *torture*, to express which another and distinct word is employed. This is done in the case of those who are described in the Epistle to the Hebrews, as having been "tortured, not accepting deliverance" (Heb. xi. 35). Here the word employed is τυμπανιζομαι, a word derived from τυμπανον, an instrument of torture.

We have already drawn attention to the fact that Dives, when suffering, distinctly expresses pity for

others, and desires their timely repentance; a state of mind apparently foreign to this worldly and selfish man while on earth; and we now ask,—Is nothing to be learned from this? Does it not at least seem to indicate that the retributions of Hades *may* be,—nay, that in some cases they *are* disciplinary as well as retributive? And if so, why may they not be regarded as preparatory to that further probation in the world (or age) to come, which we believe Scripture in many places *hints at?*

The prejudiced, or the careless, may call such a notion "Purgatory," and content themselves with the sneer; but thoughtful readers will perceive at once that it is at least no such purgatory as that with which Rome deludes her victims. Dean Alford seems to think that the statement—"Between us and you there is a great gulf *fixed*," necessarily implies *for ever*. But this cannot be; for no one believes that the souls of the wicked will remain *for ever* in Hades. He acknowledges that the *place* of punishment referred to is transitional, yet fails to see that on this account the separating gulf *can* only affect persons in that particular state. The sorrows of Hades *may*, indeed, and in some cases doubtless will be, only the prelude to further and final woe; but that such will be invariably the case, is nowhere taught in Holy Scripture. A.

(To be concluded in our next.)

SCRIPTURE.

Chap. VI.—*On Hindrances arising from* False Applications *of Scripture.*

THE late Dr. Maitland, in an ingenious essay on impediments to the right understanding of Scripture, introduces a man of business, who, with a certain sort of self-satisfaction, apologizes for his own shortcomings thus,—"I am a plain Christian, worried with the cares of my business and family, and glad to catch half an hour to read my Bible. I must make the most of it. I must employ the little leisure I can snatch at intervals in *devotional* reading, and *my* object must be my own edification."

The reply made to him is,—"To be sure, you must read for your edification; but what is the distinction which you seem to draw between reading for your edification and reading with a view to learn all that God offers to teach?"

He answers,—"Why, I mean that I must read the Scriptures with *application to myself*, to my *own circumstances*, to my *own soul*. If I come to a part which I do not understand, I have not time and learning to investigate its meaning; and when I attempt it, I often find that the time, which should have been employed in devotion, has been wasted in turning over commentators, from whom, after all, I get perhaps no satisfaction as to the real meaning of the passage, though some of the more pious and practical among

them may assist me in applying it to myself. Now, if I do not thus derive a *personal application to myself*, what use is there in my reading such a part of Scripture at all?"

The rejoinder which follows—and it expresses the one great lesson we are anxious to impress in the present chapter, is this:—"To speak plainly, I do not know that, with your views and ideas, there is much use in your reading such a part of Scripture, because, as soon as you have found that you cannot understand it, or make it apply to yourself as it stands, you set to work to make some meaning which you do not yourself believe to be the real meaning, and to fetch out some doctrine or precept which the text does not contain; and this habit is so prejudicial, that I believe it would be better for you only to read such parts as you cannot doubt do really apply to your own circumstances. It is not likely that you will reap any benefit from reading the rest of the Scriptures, sufficient to counterbalance the injury which must arise from the habit of setting aside all inquiry as to the real meaning of the word of God, and fancying that any imaginations of your own are more profitable than the mind of the Spirit."

If this method of treating Scripture—so graphically described,—be common, and we fear it is, we may cease to wonder that so much of God's word is unintelligible to the general reader. *Any book*, thus handled, must necessarily become so; for the moment we allow ourselves to read with any other aim than to understand the meaning of the writer, we darken that which is before us so thoroughly, that it is all but hopeless to expect it can ever become clear.

In reading Scripture, we are *bound*,—and that most emphatically,—no less by reverence for its Author than by integrity of heart, to ask but one question,—"*What does it*

say?" And if, to get this question answered, it is necessary to ascertain not only what the precise words are, but when and to whom they were spoken,—to observe the connection in which they stand, and to note the circumstances under which they were uttered, we must neither grudge the labour that may be involved, nor imagine that we can evade its necessity by indulging in our own fancies, however ingenious they may be, or by prolonging mere meditation, however spiritual or devout. When the *true meaning* of a passage is made out, and *not till then*, shall we be able to *apply* it with simplicity of purpose, or receive and realize as living words that which has been written or spoken.

In doing this, a thoughtful and intelligent reader will gladly avail himself of such helps as he can obtain. For the meaning of words, he will pay attention to the *marginal* readings given in the authorized version; he will consult intelligent commentators; he may perhaps think it worth while to learn enough Greek (and for this purpose very little will suffice) to enable him, with the assistance of a Greek New Testament construed literally, and word for word, to study Dean Alford's invaluable notes.

For the rest, *ordinary sagacity* will generally suffice. The Bible always takes for granted that readers are possessed of *common sense;* that they will give the same kind and amount of *attention* to inspired statements which they are in the habit of bestowing on ordinary writings; and that they will read its communications continuously, and *as a whole*,—not in mere disjointed fragments, as is generally done.

No one who has not tried the experiment can imagine what a flood of light falls upon a Pauline Epistle when it is *read through at one sitting*, with quickened attention to its scope

and purpose. In no other way can we perceive its lights and shadows, its tone and perspective, or *get above* the one-sided interpretations which are continually thrust upon us both from the press and the pulpit.

Instead of treating Scripture in this way, looking to the Holy Spirit for a right state of heart, and in harmony with that supplication, struggling manfully against the impulses of prejudice and pride, the ignorant and unthinking among Christian persons—and their name is legion—delude themselves with the notion that all they have to do is to pray for *Divine light*, which, if they ask in faith, they feel sure they will receive, however idle, or uncandid, or bigoted they may continue to be.

The tendency which *preaching too exclusively for impression* has to foster the evil of which we complain, will be seen when we come to notice the hindrances which arise from the *rhetorical* use of Scripture. At present we confine our remarks to the private reading of the Word, and in relation to this we have only to say that, if we would be *honest* before God,—if we would shrink with righteous susceptibility from sacrificing a true thought, in order to gain thereby the use of *mere words* in favour of some doctrine or practice to which they were never intended to apply; or, worse still, to derive from them a false authority for comforts or reproofs far from the mind of the sacred writer,—we shall feel not only that nothing can justify such misapplications of Holy Writ, but that they can derive no support from the fact that they may have been long sustained by religious writers, however honoured or useful.

It is this carelessness about truth, shown so often by the Fathers, that has made them, with all their eloquence

and piety, such untrustworthy interpreters. It is this which compels us, in perusing their writings, to *pause and doubt;* since passing events, party interests, or the hope of polemical triumphs, were, to them, a continual excuse for the most outrageous violations of the original meaning of the inspired volume. It is this which forces from us the exclamation,—"The *words* that are used are the words of the Prophet or the Evangelist, but the preacher stands behind them, and adapts them to his own purposes."*

Hence it is that patristic writers so often support a great cause "in a spirit alien to its own;" sometimes "adopting arguments that are unchristian in their ultimate grounds;" sometimes "resting upon errors the refutation of errors;" and sometimes "drawing upon the armouries of darkness for weapons that, to be durable, ought to have been of celestial temper;" *now*, it may be, trespassing against "affections which furnish to Christianity its moving powers;" and *now* against "truths which furnish to Christianity its guiding lights." On behalf of God "they often seem determined to be wiser than God; and, in demonstration of spiritual power, they do not scruple to advance doctrines which the Scriptures have nowhere warranted."† The issue of it all was,—THE ROMISH APOSTACY.

The dangers of the present day are not so very dissimilar as they may at first sight appear. It is chiefly through *misapplications* of Scripture words, that so many are now led to choose startling rather than scriptural modes of doing good; sometimes to adopt language, both in prayer and preaching, which would almost seem to imply that the speaker loves the ignorant and the wretched more than Christ

* Jowett. † De Quincey.

does; and sometimes to talk as if they forgot that the most enlightened spiritual convictions are those which are most habitually held in submission to our Maker, and which are least tinged by self-seeking or display. Nor is the fear groundless that, in proportion as the Church sanctions any kind of extravagance in the use of Scripture, will the ground of faith itself be nullified; certainty in Bible interpretation be destroyed; and arbitrary principles established, which must eventually lead either to ignorant credulity or to universal scepticism.*

We lay it down, therefore, as a rule which should never be violated, that he who would understand his Bible must beware of throwing false associations around true words, or of *applying* the truths of revelation in any way not in harmony with the aim and object of the Revealer. D.

FAMILIARITY WITH SCRIPTURE.

"Familiarity with Scripture does sometimes operate as an impediment to our receiving its full sense—I mean familiarity with its language. We are familiarly accustomed to much of its peculiar phraseology, and many of its expressions have, in fact, become common on account of their peculiarity. Thus they lose much of their force, and we are apt to pass them over without being so struck with them as we should be if we saw them for the first time. This I believe to be a reason why persons who have not received a religious education, if they come seriously to study the Scriptures at mature age, not unfrequently hit upon things which have been passed over by those who had been much longer conversant with the Bible. With a view to remedy or diminish this evil, I would strongly recommend the reader sometimes to read the Bible in any language beside his own."—*Maitland.*

* See Dr. Pye Smith on Principles of Interpretation.

FORMS OF THOUGHT.

PROTESTANT DISSENT.

ENGLISH DISSENT, understanding by that term something more than mere Nonconformity, is, with few exceptions, a development of unmixed Puritanism.

Its history is the history of Puritanism,—first as a remonstrant, then as a persecuted, and finally as a triumphant faith. "Cast down, but not destroyed," it has emerged in modern days, at once political and religious, claiming, and to a great extent enjoying, a freedom little short of equality with the Established Church.

Setting aside small and unimportant bodies, Dissent, in England, may be divided into two great sections,—the one Congregational, the other Wesleyan. The former must be regarded as including Baptists; the latter as embracing a variety of offshoots from the parent stock, which have, at different times, spread themselves over the soil.

The *strength* of Dissent lies mainly in a class who are, for the most part, above poverty, and who sometimes rise to distinction in consequence of the wealth they acquire in trade and manufactures. Some among them *approve* of a religious establishment, regarding such an institution, not only as a social blessing, but also as a useful breakwater against the inroads of fanaticism; by far the greater part, however, take a contrary view, and consider any connection between the Church and the State to be injurious to both.

As a rule, Protestant Dissent represents the *progressive* element in the country, and is essentially democratic.

The power of the Church of England, on the contrary, arises from its historical connection with the Crown, from its adoption by the State, and, above all, from the fact that it is, for many reasons, the Church of the Court, the aristocracy, the learned professions, and the landed interest generally. As a rule, it represents the element of *permanence*, and is, in spite of some apparent contradictions, thoroughly conservative.

That, *spiritually*, such men as Wesley and Whitfield, springing as they did from the bosom of the Church, have been the regenerators of her ministry, few will deny; for if, as some suppose, Anglicanism, by its articles and formularies, has been the mainstay of doctrinal truth not only within its own borders, but in those of its antagonists, secession has certainly kept alive a zeal which, but for such a stimulus, would long since have subsided into formality.

Anti-Hierarchical, however, as English Dissent unquestionably is, it is in no sense whatever Anti-Clerical. Its ministers, when well educated—and some of them are men of great attainments and high culture,—though supported by voluntary contributions alone, and so far dependent upon their people, are, as a class, quite as independent, and, in their own circles, quite as much respected, and *probably more yielded to* than are the ministers of any established church. In one respect only may this be questioned;—they enjoy little liberty with regard to supposed deviations from orthodoxy. The influence of public opinion, in this case dominant and exercised without check, is far more tyrannical than the rule of bishops, and far more stringent than any subscription to articles.

Perhaps it may be added, without offence, that Dissenters, like the Evangelical section in the Church of England, frequently make too much of emotion, experience, and supposed spiritual distinctions.

This is emphatically true of Wesleyans, whose history, comparatively a modern one, is but a repetition, with certain doctrinal variations, of the original Puritan separation. Like the Puritan movement, and, indeed, like the Reformation itself, Wesleyanism *originated* under clerical auspices, *developed* under lay energy and zeal, and then *suffered* by a reaction in favour of clericalism, which ended, as such things generally do, in compromise. Order, so called, in process of time, took the place of irregular zeal, and a fully organized religious denomination sprang out of what was originally intended to be neither more nor less than a free outburst of spiritual life.

It is curious to observe how the Church, like the world, repeats itself. Italy, at the present moment, so far as its Protestantism is concerned, is in many respects what Wesleyanism was in England a century ago, and what France was for the first fifty years after the introduction among her people of an open Bible.

"The reformed then had no organization, civil or ecclesiastical; they had no church, no creed, no fixed form of worship. It was a quiet, hidden movement in the hearts of men thirsting for religious truth, for peace of conscience, for purity of heart and life. They sought each other out, and met to help each other on. But it was in small bands; in closets with closed doors, in the murky lanes of the city, in the lonely hut by the way-side, in the gorge of the mountain, in the heart of the forest, that they met to study the Scriptures together,—to praise and pray. They did so at the peril of their lives; and the greatness of the peril guarded the purity of the movement. Ordinarily, they had

no educated ministry. These first years of Protestantism in France may be fitly described as *its age of purity*."*

In England this free ministry very soon took the form of Independency, to which continued persecution gave life, vigour, and permanence. In Scotland it hardened into Presbyterianism, which, under similar discipline, became the fixed form of religious life in that land,—but not without a repudiation of the right of private judgment in the interpretation of Scripture, expressed in terms worthy of the Vatican—terms which, strange as it may seem, embody to this day the law of the Church of Scotland, and which, only eighteen years ago, were formally re-asserted by a seceding body, when abandoning everything in order to render what they regarded as a faithful testimony in favour of the sole headship of Christ in His Church.

The words to which we refer are found in the "Directory for Public Worship," and are extracted from "The Authorized Documents of the Free Church of Scotland," published by the General Assembly in 1857.

Family Worship.—"The charge and office of interpreting the Holy Scriptures is a part of the ministerial calling, which none, *however otherwise qualified*, should take upon him in any place, but he that is duly called thereunto by God and his kirk."

"Let no idler, who hath no particular calling, or vagrant person under a pretext of a calling, *be suffered to perform worship in families*, to or for the same; seeing persons tainted with errors, or aiming at division, may be ready (after that manner) to creep into houses, and lead captive silly and unstable souls."

"At family worship, a special care is to be had that each family keep by themselves; neither requiring, inviting, nor admitting persons from divers families, unless it be those who are lodged with them, or at

* "Wycliffe and the Huguenots," by the Rev. William Hanna, LL.D., p. 149.

meals, or otherwise with them upon some lawful reason." The objection taken (among others) is, that such meetings tend "to the prejudice of the public ministry."—(*Directory of Worship*, p. 409.)

These regulations, first framed in the year 1647, tell their own tale. Their object evidently is to *put down* meetings which had lingered among the people from the times of the Reformation—meetings which the General Assembly admit had been productive of good "effects and fruit in the times of corruption and trouble," yet were "to be disapproved" when God had blessed them "with peace and purity of the Gospel." This was the kind of clerical re-action which now triumphed everywhere, and under the influence of which an effective stop was soon put to the progress of the reforming movement altogether; for *since that time*—and let Christians mark well the fact—*the Reformation has not advanced one step in any country in Europe.*

Few, we suppose, would now justify a tyranny of this character; but fewer still, we fear, would like to see a revival of the liberty it condemns, if *connected*, as it then clearly was, with something like a repudiation of a clerical order. Yet indications are not wanting in Roman Catholic countries, that these sentiments will revive in connection with the downfall of the Papacy and the advancement of religious freedom. It cannot, therefore, be unsuitable to keep them under our attention.

In our next we propose to consider Church Principles so far as they seem to bear on this vexed question. E.

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[*All communications for the Editor should be addressed to* No. 14, Bartholomew Close, Aldersgate Street, London, E.C.]

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at,—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints, as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine*.

HELL.

(THIRD PAPER.)

IN our last paper we endeavoured to show that the testimony of Scripture, so far as it can be gathered, relative to the invisible world, points to the conclusion that the punishments of the wicked *commence* in Hades immediately after death; that they *spring* out of past character and conduct; that they are exactly *proportioned* to guilt—"few stripes," or "many

[Registered for transmission abroad.]

stripes," as God sees necessary; and that they are *not incompatible* with moral improvement.

The question, therefore, naturally arises,—"Is there any reason to suppose that this state of disciplinary correction in Hades is preparatory to a further probation, after the resurrection, in the world (or age) to come,—on the supposition that such have not *absolutely rejected* the Gospel while on earth, but may be numbered among those who, so far as man can judge, have had no vital or spiritual understanding of it?"

No answer to this inquiry can be satisfactorily drawn from the particular class of texts at present under our consideration. A reply to it involves a somewhat extended review of the whole teaching of Scripture relative to the world to come, a process in which we have for some time past been diligently engaged. *Much*, after all, we may not be permitted to discern, for Scripture is not given us to satisfy "an inbred and restless curiosity." Yet the little we *do* know is too instructive to be neglected, for we are sadly prone to *misrepresent* our heavenly Father, either on the side of justice or of mercy.

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus will be of great value to us if it keeps us from either of these errors. Manifold are its lessons. It teaches us how little it avails to be *nominally* Christian; for the punished one is a son of Abraham. It teaches us that the selfish and the worldly (for the rich man is not represented as vicious or profligate), whatever may be in reserve for them at the coming of the Lord, are in

the unseen world punished, like Dives, or disciplined, as God knows how, by *solitary thought*, each reaping precisely as he has sown. It teaches us that the "righteous" alone, washed in the blood of the Lamb, and sanctified by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, wait, like Lazarus, in the blessed repose of paradise for the perfection of their bliss; and probably receive *there*, from Christ Himself, lessons of love, and revelations of glory, which could not be imparted on earth without endangering a frame unfitted for the reception of more than earthly splendours.

This much, at least, may fairly be predicated from *Scripture* regarding a state which, though unseen by mortal eye, is yet intensely real, and into which the children of men are every moment entering.

But not *there* alone will the past and the present influence the future. Under that further probation, after the resurrection, which we believe awaits the great majority of the race, will the results of time well spent, or misspent, still more decidedly bring forth its appropriate fruit, and every man gather precisely as he has sown. Some, with weeping and gnashing of teeth (the Jewish mode of expressing *grief and vexation*), will then, beholding Christ coming "the second time without a sin-offering unto salvation" (Heb. ix. 28), mourn, with a bitterness proportioned to what they will *now* feel to be the loss sustained by their self-wrought exclusion from the Church of the First-born; and some who, on earth, lived and died fancying themselves *within* the guest-chamber, will then, to

their utter astonishment, find themselves *without*,—plunged into that "outer (or rather, *outside*) darkness," which so strikingly contrasts with the brilliancy of the marriage banquet. They were *disciples*, but they neglected the charge, "Enter ye in at the strait gate," and they now find it is too late, for "the door is shut" (Luke xiii. 24). In vain do they cry, "Lord, Lord, open unto us. We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets." The only reply is, "I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when they shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and they themselves thrust out" (ver. 26—28).

Then will some, like "Chorazin and Bethsaida" (cities of privilege), find "Tyre and Sidon" (heathen and untaught) in a condition far better than their own; and others (the self-satisfied), like "Capernaum," will discover, to their amazement, that Sodom, with all its abominations, is nearer to God than they. Now will one find himself a "vessel to honour," and another to "dishonour;" to whom "much has been given," of him will "much be required;" he who has improved his "one talent" will find himself entrusted with "five" or with "ten" talents; and there are "last" which shall be "first," and "first" which shall be "last." He who has stored his riches in the heavens now enjoys his wealth. "The meek" are inheriting the earth. Every man receives "according to his deeds,"

and each goes "to his own place." All "the immense varieties and dissimilarities of human condition, constitution, capacity, and nurture; the strength of passions, the defect or power of intellect, the controlling circumstances from birth to mature age, from the most savage ignorance or fatuity to the highest forms of civilization and talent; from the darkest idolatry or most negative stupor, to the clearest revealed light, and the most distinct perception of its value,"* will then be recognized and allowed for with the most discriminating exactitude; the multitudinous diversity which prevails among men, finding its exact counterpart in the equally multitudinous diversity of the Divine procedure as to the respective moral destiny of each one moral being.

We have now completed our task, and in conclusion desire only to add a few words as to *the method* we have pursued, and *the results* at which we have arrived.

In relation to the first (the method pursued), let it be observed we have strictly confined ourselves to Scripture testimony. We have not discussed the

* "On the Duration of Evil:" an Essay (Simpkin, Marshall, and Co.) This small, and we fear all but unknown, anonymous publication, is a work of high character, written with singular precision, and marked by the purest taste. Piety, humility, and a profound reverence for Scripture, characterize every page of it. We say this, without expressing any opinion on the actual eternity or non-eternity of evil as embodied in Satan, since this question may perhaps involve matters beyond the purposes for which the Bible was given.

supposed reasonableness of any particular view. We have not attempted to weaken the force of the words "eternal" or "everlasting."* We have not asked, what is most in accordance with *our sense* of right? We have not imagined it possible for man to be more merciful than his Maker; for well do we know, that if we have either piety or benevolence, *He gave it us*, and the fountain is surely higher than the stream. We have simply inquired as to what is *scriptural*. We acknowledge no other authority. Only let us be satisfied that any given doctrine is revealed *there*, and we bow; for we *believe* in the Bible as a Divine revelation, and have no sympathy whatever with those who would judge such a message from God by human consciousness, or measure it by any supposed spiritual intuitions of their own.

The *result* at which we have arrived is, that future punishment, properly so termed, is endured in Hades; that it is strictly retributive; that its general character

* We think a great deal of time and learning have been wasted on discussions about the word *αιωνιον*. Every one admits that it is used in Scripture in *two* senses; sometimes to indicate limitation (*αιων* is constantly used to express this *age* or world, Matt. xii. 32; xiii. 22), and sometimes to express a state or period beyond that of time. 'Is it not then safe and reasonable to understand the word, not in the vulgar sense of mere endless duration,—for this can make nothing "eternal" which has had a beginning,—but as referring to the grief or rapture *of the world to come* in opposition to that which now is; the one being temporary, measured by time, the other eternal, having no such limitation? Bengel puts it thus:—"That which touches upon and goes beyond the limits of earthly time."

arises from the natural working out of the great laws under which man is placed, and that its *degrees* are as manifold as the degrees of human guilt.

So far we do not anticipate any material difference of opinion. For the rest we can appeal only to "the Book." We are satisfied that it teaches, in the plainest possible terms, that the *final* lot of the irreclaimably wicked is "hell," the "lake of fire," the "second death;"—a judgment *directly inflicted* by the hand of God, and not in any sense the natural result of violated law. In this characteristic it strikingly differs from the punishments of the invisible world, which, as we have seen, are, to a great extent, like remorse, intended to lead to repentance; or, like retributive disease, but the inevitable consequence of folly or neglect. Further, it has no gradations, for how anything like *degree* can be associated with an *everlasting* punishment, *first* represented as being cast into a "lake of fire," and *then* explained to be a "second death," it passes our comprehension to understand.

Such terms, *naturally* understood, would certainly seem to imply the absolute extinction of being, by a Divine and judicial execution. We say *naturally*, because *in no other sense* would any unprejudiced reader ever think of understanding either such a passage as Matt. x. 28, where the killing of the body and the killing of the soul are spoken of under the same term (αποκτειναι, to kill, is used in both cases), or Rev. xx. 14, where, as we have just said, the "lake of

fire" is distinctly stated to be the "second death." To allege, as the late Moses Stuart does, that such words as destroyed, perishing, and eternal *death*, are "the most eligible that could have been chosen" to express the idea of eternal *life* in misery, "seems," as has been well said, "to be trifling with that common sense which God in His mercy has given to the unlearned, to preserve them from the infatuations occasionally incident to their superiors in knowledge."

To suggest such a *possibility*, however, as the ultimate annihilation of the wicked, is, at present, an offence; it takes away, it is said, all *terror* from the minds of the guilty, and, in so doing, at once emboldens them in sin, and makes them reckless of consequences; for *who*, it is argued, will care for the "lake of fire," if separated from eternal sensitive torment in its flame? To this some add the strange notion, that, in proportion as we lessen the fearfulness of future punishment, we diminish the value of the death of Christ.*

We are not, however, disposed to *argue* this question. The duty of the Christian, with the Word of God in his hand, is plain. It is simply to ask,—"WHAT IS

* Some assert that the doctrine of the Atonement *implies* that of the eternal torment of all the unregenerate; and others (as Bp. Pearson) say, "He who believeth not the eternity of torments to come, can never sufficiently value that ransom by which we are redeemed from them." How strange that it should be thought more glorious that the redemption of Christ should be a blessing to the few than to the many; that God's "unspeakable gift" should alone make credible *never ending sin and misery;* that the Gospel of holiness and love obliges us to believe in the hopeless ruin of the race.

TRUTH?" not, What is it most expedient to teach, *as if it were* truth? But we may be permitted to say to the defenders of eternal sin and suffering, that the *arguments* they use are *the very same arguments* that were employed for ages in defence of inflicting the most horrible tortures on criminals. What, it was said, is death (since all must die) to a murderer or a traitor?

For ourselves we frankly avow,—let the consequences be what they may,—that, having searched diligently, and we hope with a sincere desire to ascertain the whole truth, we cannot find a syllable in Scripture to sanction the popular notion (really derived from the fathers and founders of the Romish apostacy), that God ever allows *torture*, or ever practises it Himself. The punishment of death—capital punishment—He commanded of old. "Thine eye shall not pity" (Deut. xix. 13); that eminent criminals were, by Divine authority, burnt, seems also certain (Lev. xx. 14),—but whether alive, or after being otherwise put to death (as was the case with those who were cast into Tophet), is not so clear; that under the Christian dispensation, the judicial taking away of life is sanctioned, cannot fairly be disputed,—for the magistrate "beareth not *the sword* in vain" (Rom. xiii. 4); but *nowhere*, and under no conditions, does God sanction torture.*

* We do not say that the Jews never *practised* it, but that God never sanctioned it. David is, indeed, in one instance, represented as putting his prisoners "under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron," and making them "pass through the brick-kiln," but most judicious

The supposition that He did, led to its infliction in Christian countries by man on man,—formed the chief justification of the horrors of the Inquisition, and laid the foundations, deep and firm, of purgatory and priestcraft. If this barbarity has so entirely ceased from among ourselves, that even the most cruel assassins are exempt from its agonies, it is only because the advancing steps of Christianity have driven it away. If the doctrine of the future—nay, the eternal—infliction of it by God yet lingers in the Church, it is because the dark shadow of the apostacy still falls over us, and because base notions of what it seems *expedient* to teach, override that love of truth which makes a man fearless of all consequences in its service.

It is impossible to suppose that St. Paul, who so strikingly calls God to witness that he kept nothing back from his converts,—that he had "not shunned to declare" unto them "the whole counsel of God" (Acts xx. 26, 27), *could* have used the term "death" as he does in so many passages,—and always, be it observed, as the antithesis of "life,"—had he intended to teach that this "death" *meant* eternal life in torture. The same may be observed of Peter, John, and James, the three disciples who had been most intimate with the Lord; of all of them we say, it is impossible to suppose that they could have kept back such a doctrine,—so unlike

commentators consider that this *messes*, he made them, as slaves, cut down trees, drag the harrow over the fields, or make bricks. To *pass under an axe or a saw*, might indicate symbolically that life was forfeited, but scarcely describes any form of torture.

everything else in Scripture,—when a few plain sentences would have sufficed both to explain and to enforce it.

One *apparent exception* to all that we have stated certainly exists; and as we have not the least wish to evade a single line of Scripture, we call attention to it. It is this,—"The third angel," flying in the midst of heaven (Rev. xiv. 9—11), proclaims,—"If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall *drink* of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be *tormented* with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and *the smoke* of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

On this passage we would simply observe, *first*, that it is a special judgment threatened only in connection with a *particular form* of idolatrous worship in the last days, carried on in "Babylon the great;" *secondly*, that the torment (βασανισμος) is not said to be inflicted in *hell*, or after the last judgment, but, as it would appear from the context, on *earth*, and at the second coming of Christ. The reference to "day and night" also indicates that *earth* is the place of punishment; *thirdly*, that the same word (βασανιζω) is applied to *the city itself*, whose overthrow and utter destruction is called *her torment* (Rev. xviii. 7—10), and "her

smoke" is said, in like manner, to rise up "for ever and ever" (xix. 3), just as in Jude, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is called "suffering the vengeance of *eternal* fire" (ver. 7), although we are told by Ezekiel (xvi. 53—63) that Sodom shall "return" to her "former estate," and be given "to Israel for a daughter, *though not by covenant.*" St. Paul speaks of these very sinners,—those of the last days,—as men who shall be punished (lit., suffer *as* punishment) *everlasting destruction* from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.

It is obviously neither wise nor safe to found any doctrine on a passage confessedly so obscure, and certainly so *symbolic,* as the one in question,—especially as it does not specifically point to hell at all, and is acknowledged by every intelligent reader to refer to a state of things still hidden in the future. Yet beyond this solitary and most inconclusive text, there is not anything in Scripture which even seems to justify the assertion that impenitent men are everlastingly tormented.

We repeat,—Hell, as revealed in Scripture, has *no tortures,* and, therefore, *no degrees* in punishment; it is utter, hopeless, irremediable ruin; and we would solemnly warn every Christian man to beware what he is about when he asserts the contrary. Heathenism is an abomination unto God, mainly because *it represents Him to be what He is not,*—vindictive and cruel. Christians misrepresent Him no less when they forget either His Fatherhood on the one hand, or His hatred

of sin on the other; when they represent Him either as *all mercy*, or as so arranging the final destinies of the world, that evil triumphs in the ruin of *the race*.

We are quite aware that many will only glance at what we have written, and then "pass by on the other side," with the exclamation,—*Who now* holds to physical torture, or to material fire? Who now would endorse the statements on this subject of President Edwards and Jeremy Taylor, of the Fathers, and the Reformers, and the Puritans? Who now believes that *the great majority* of men will be miserable for ever?

We answer such questions calmly and considerately when we say, "*the bulk of English Christians do.*" The ignorant,—all of them; children,—without exception; well-informed adults,—generally. We are quite aware that the topic of Future Punishment is, in the present day, rarely introduced into the pulpit, and that when it *is* mentioned, it is always in the most vague and general terms; for neither the rewards nor the retributions of the world to come occupy any prominent place in modern teaching. The *former* are frequently considered to be somewhat inconsistent with a full and free salvation; the *latter* are regarded as too dreadful for popular handling. The *loss* occasioned by this unbelieving avoidance of important truth is far greater than is generally supposed; but things can never be otherwise so long as men hold to the "glorification" of *all* the saved, and the eternal misery of *all* the lost. A.

SCRIPTURE.

Chap. VII.—*On Hindrances arising from the* Accommodation *of Texts.*

THAT *accommodations* of Scripture are, *to a certain extent*, sanctioned both by our Lord and His apostles, cannot be questioned; yet, be it observed, always under conditions which prevent misconception. In no instance that we are aware of, does a quotation made on inspired authority darken the primary or literal meaning; on the contrary, in most cases, a clear and distinct recognition of the original sense is involved; and in *all*, the citation, whether allusive, illustrative, or intended to indicate parallel circumstances, is simple and natural.

Hindrances are occasioned whenever the *words* of Scripture are so used as to cloud their true meaning; when the reader, instead of being enlightened, is *misled* by biblical quotation; and when the mind of the Spirit, though professedly expressed, is really neglected or perverted.

Such is unquestionably the case when texts intended for one purpose are applied to another; when the messages of the Prophets to Israel of old are *read* as if they were addressed to the men of this generation; when warnings of *temporal* calamity are silently changed into threatenings of eternal woe; when promises of *earthly* good are transformed into predictions of spiritual blessing; and when Christ is supposed to be referred to in passages which clearly indicate that no such thought was in the mind of the inspired speaker or writer.

The few examples we propose to give must be regarded only as *specimens of a class;* they are furnished chiefly for the purpose of illustration.

(1) "*Prepare to meet thy God*" (Amos iv. 12) is frequently used in public discourse as if the prophet, in these words, called upon all men to prepare for death and judgment. Yet this is not the fact. The sacred writer is not referring to death at all, but to the temporal judgments which God had inflicted, and threatens still to inflict, on the rebellious Israelites. The passage that *ought* to be quoted for the warning of the ungodly is Acts xvii. 31, since it is a distinct revelation of the New Testament.

(2) "*The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved*" (Jer. viii. 20). This text is constantly quoted as if it implied that for the parties spoken of the day of grace was past; and then the words that immediately follow,—"*Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there?*" are regarded as prophetic of Christ. Yet, taken as they stand, and in connection with the circumstances under which they were uttered, they simply mean, "One year after another,—one campaign after another,—passes, and we are not saved from the enemy." (So *Matthew Henry.*)

(3) "*Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off*" (Isa. xxxiii. 17). How often have these words been whispered in the ear of the dying believer, in the sense of a promise that he shall soon see Christ and find rest in heaven. And yet (like 1 Cor. ii. 9) it has no such reference. The true meaning is, "The king (Hezekiah) shall put off his sackcloth, and shall appear in his beautiful and royal robes; and, the siege being raised, they (the people)

shall go abroad, the empire of Hezekiah shall be extended, and distant parts be thrown open to them." (*Henry, Lowth, Boothroyd, and others.*) It is quite true that the Christian looks forward to a period when his eyes shall see Christ, his King, in His beauty, and enjoy a bliss greater than eye hath seen, or ear heard, or the heart of man conceived; yet nothing can excuse this *perversion* of texts, in order to express a truth capable of being well supported by legitimate means.

(4) "*I have trodden the wine-press alone; and of the people there was none with me*" (Isa. lxiii. 3). This passage, in consequence of its frequent accommodation, is commonly understood to refer to the *sufferings* of the Saviour. Bishop Heber and other hymn writers use it in this sense, as if they were quite unconscious of its true meaning. And yet the slightest attention to the context will show that it really refers to Christ coming in triumph, to take vengeance on His enemies. No other meaning can be attached to it, except by stopping in the middle of a verse. The text as a whole thus reads,—"I will tread *them*" (not be trodden upon by them) "in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come" (ver. 3, 4). Compare with this passage Rom. xvi. 20; Rev. xiv. 19; and xix. 11—13, and all is plain.*

(5) "*The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no*

* This, and many other well chosen examples, will be found in a sensible little book, by a well-known layman, entitled, "Accommodated Texts; or, Texts and Contexts," by R. C. L. B.

soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores" (Isa. i. 5, 6) is constantly used in prayer to express the doctrine of the depravity of human nature. The slightest attention to the context would suffice to show that the words in question simply refer to the condition of Israel *as stricken by punishment.* She is compared to one who has been beaten from head to foot.

Is it needful to say that such a method of quoting Scripture, in accordance, not with truth, but with our own pre-conceived notions, is every way misleading and mischievous? Is it not clothing our human thought in a Divine garment, and then demanding for it an authority to which it has no claim? Never should it be forgotten that Scripture is *inspired truth* only in the sense in which it was originally given; in no other form whatever can it, with any propriety, be termed the Word of God.

On this subject the late Dr. Pye Smith has some admirable observations in his "Principles of Interpretation." Speaking of the evils which arise from thus accommodating Scripture, he observes,—"It may be said, indeed, that the citation is merely made in the same way in which men often quote a line of poetry, and apply it to any new occasion. Yet it should be recollected, that in so applying a fine passage of Virgil or Milton, for instance, we can do no harm; we can lead no man into error by it; the new application is never supposed to have been the original intention of the author. But since the Scriptures are the repository of God's revelation, to which all Christians justly look for the authoritative declarations of eternal truth and religious obligation, it is evidently a far more serious matter for us to quote scriptural passages, even in an incidental way. *It is almost*

certain that most hearers and readers will imagine that the transient citation, or allusion, is mentioned *as evidence* in the particular respect for which it is adduced."

"How many are in the habit of quoting passages of Scripture in ways which imply a meaning and application exceedingly remote from their genuine design! *This is not a trifling evil.* It is pregnant with injuries to the cause of Scriptural knowledge and practical edification. It encourages among Christians a widely prevailing practice of reading the Scriptures with little attention, and of applying detached passages in sentences entirely foreign to their proper meaning."*

Let the object we have in view in writing these papers be steadily kept in mind,—the promotion of a more intelligent reading of Holy Scripture, by pointing out and seeking to remove the various hindrances which at present interfere with our so doing,—and it will be seen at once that the "accommodations" of which we complain, whatever may be the intentions of those who make and defend them, do really "darken counsel," and so far tend to destroy the Divine testimony. Read with the impressions produced by such expositions as those we have referred to (for they have all *the effect* of exposition), Isaiah becomes unintelligible, Jeremiah mystical, and Amos hopelessly beclouded. Other scriptures are equally darkened by the same process; and the Bible, instead of being *felt* to be, as it really is, the most *interesting* book ever penned, becomes to the reader dull, because *made dark*, and hard to understand, because treated as if it were a mere collection of disjointed fragments, to be interpreted by the aid of devout fancy or spiritual caprice.

D.

* "Principles of Interpretation," by John Pye Smith, D.D. 1831.

CHURCH PRINCIPLES.

PERMANENCE OF THE APOSTOLATE.

THE revival of "Church Principles," which took place in England about thirty years ago, marks a new era in the religious life of the country. The *form* which that movement soon assumed; the *talent* and energy which it developed; the religious *earnestness* to which it led; and the disastrous *result* which it accomplished, in compelling the secession of some of the most distinguished ornaments of the Church of England from her pale to that of Rome, have given to it a prominence and a social importance which it is difficult to over-estimate.

It is not so generally known that about the same time, another and very different movement,—outwardly, and to the superficial eye, unworthy of remark, yet, perhaps, destined in the end to effect results of the greatest moment,—commenced in Dublin, and, soon after, rapidly extended itself on this side of the Channel.

This latter attempt,—which subsequently took shape as "Brethrenism,"—excited at the time but little attention; partly because the actors were not persons of any great influence in society, and partly because the whole thing very soon assumed a sectarian form, and disappeared from notice amid the crowd of other religious communities with which it became confounded. The *fact*, however, of the

all but simultaneous commencement of two religious movements so thoroughly antagonistic in their character as these unquestionably were, is surely worth notice.

Such coincidences are by no means unusual. Events that thus *contrast* are frequently found to have something like a common origin, since they spring, for the most part, out of circumstances peculiar to the day that gives them birth, and mark the commencement of those great periods of change which, from time to time, break upon the world. It was while Luther was shaking Europe by his thunders, and building up at Augsburg a Protestantism never to be overthrown, that Loyola, in his narrow cell at Paris, was inducing Xavier, Faber, Laynez, Bobadilla, and Rodriguez to form themselves into an association for bringing all men into subjection to Luther's great enemy, the Pope; and it is not a mere fancy to imagine that the same starlight night that saw these six young men on the summit of Monmartre take their vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience to Rome, witnessed the prayers and tears of Luther, Melancthon, and Calvin for the emancipation of the world from the tyranny of that very superstition and priestcraft which Loyola and his friends were leaguing to support.

Who can trace the subsequent history of the great struggle to which all these parties were so solemnly devoting themselves, without feeling something like dismay at the thought that, after raging for above three centuries, it seems to human eye as far as ever from being over—that it is, in fact, now actually reviving afresh, although under conditions which are, as yet, only beginning to take definite form and shape? Whether the mysterious 1,260 years,—if such they be,—which have so long perplexed the students of pro-

phecy are, or are not, drawing to a conclusion may, to many, be very uncertain; but none can doubt that everywhere materials are gathering for such a struggle between authority and freedom in church matters, as the world has never yet witnessed,—a struggle distinguished above all others by its radical character; by its being one of life or death; and by its carrying in its train all the secular and social interests which are bound up, on the one hand, with the maintenance of things as they are, and on the other, with the advancement of knowledge, religion, and liberty.

The Reformation—all-important as have been its results—was, after all, mainly the work of nobles and clergy, and its history is that of emperors, kings, generals, and literary chiefs; but the struggle that is to come will be one of peoples; it will be carried on by common minds; it will identify itself with the downfall of all despotisms, military and political, as well as ecclesiastical; and march, side by side, with the triumphant outsteppings of that new and hitherto unheard-of form of human development, which is to be marked by the general diffusion of educated intelligence, by self-government, and, it is to be feared, in no slight degree, by self-will and lawlessness.

It is impossible to separate considerations like these from the discussion of what are popularly termed "Church Principles;" for these principles, whether identified with the Romish and Greek churches, or embodied in Anglicanism, in Lutheranism, or in any other form of church polity, lie at the root of all our unsettled differences, and must stand or fall with the triumph or overthrow of those great forces, moral as well as physical, which remain to be developed in the future, and which will bring, it may be in rough fashion, many a time-worn controversy to a final decision.

By "Church Principles," then, we understand all those views of truth and duty which, with whatever modifications, are held by men who conscientiously believe that "the apostleship of Jesus Christ is still and for ever in the world; as really, in all the substance of the office, as when it was held, under circumstantial differences of miraculous attestation, by Peter, and James, and John." That as, "breathing the breath" of natural life into the first man, God gave him, by a single act, a power thenceforward *physically transmissive* through the whole innumerable series of the human race; so (with evident allusion to that act) Christ,—God incarnate,—"breathing on" the apostles the Holy Ghost, conferred, once for all, a spiritual power, *analogously transmissive* to innumerable spiritual successors. That when the Lord promised to be "always, unto the end of the world," present with His eleven mortal commissaries, He spake not to the men, but to the office, or to the men as the temporary symbols, representatives, and occupants of the office. That it becomes, therefore, a violation of His appointed order to separate, under any pretext of sanctity, from this succession. That this general conception of a perpetual apostolate is manifestly confirmed by the *fact* of the organization of the apostolic churches with laity and ministers,—under individual governors,—exercising exclusive powers of ordination and spiritual superintendence, even within the limits of the New Testament; by the universal admission, in antiquity, of the claims of this high stewardship; and by the very strong presumption, far more than sufficient to constitute a clear practical obligation, that *any* form of polity universally constituted at such a time was meant to be perpetual.* Of course these views carry

* See Dr. Archer Butler's Sermon on "Primitive Church Principles."

with them an exclusive claim, on the part of those who are thus apostolically ordained, to administer sacraments, and to perform all duties properly clerical.

The antagonist "Principles" are those to which we have already referred as having taken shape in Dublin, when the "Tracts for the Times" first appeared. They assert, not only that the *permanence* of the apostolate is not taught in Scripture, but further, that any notion of a "ministerial transmission of the ministry" is altogether delusive. That Peter, in explaining how the gift of tongues (in all probability a purely ministerial gift, intended to facilitate the preaching of the Gospel) had fallen on the whole hundred and twenty in the upper room, whether young or old, apostles or private Christians, men or women, clearly expounded it as a fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel, who had told them beforehand that a time should come when the Spirit should be poured out upon all flesh, so that their sons and their daughters, their servants and their handmaidens, should prophesy. That, in so doing, he had explicitly thrown down the barrier which had hitherto restricted the ministry to an order, proclaiming it now to be the common privilege of all believers. That events soon after following, which compelled almost all *except the apostles* (Acts viii. 1—4) to flee, and led them, while everywhere scattered abroad, to "preach the word," confirmed this interpretation. That the exclusive claims to ministry set up at a later period by persons regarding themselves as successors of the apostles, was a fraudulent imposition upon a dark and superstitious age. That the entire subsequent history of the Church, viewed as a great apostacy, is one huge mass of evidence in favour of this view. That sacraments, so called, are not really such; that

they involve no mysteries; and that they may be rightly and devoutly administered by Christians to each other without any clerical interference whatever.

These are the two sets of "Principles" that, under many disguises, are really contending for the mastery, and that, before long, will, *as such*, be obliged to confront each other face to face.

In our next we propose to notice the third or middle principle, if so it may be called, which is ever endeavouring to steer between these two extremes. E.

ERROR IN LAST NUMBER.

At p. 126, line 5 from the top, after the words "believers shall not come into judgment," add—with the world.

This omission has been brought under our notice by an intelligent correspondent at Whitehaven, who justly remarks that the sentence as it stands, is not only unsupported by the Scriptures quoted, but also directly contradicts the statement of St. Paul,—"We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ" (Rom. xiv. 10; 2 Cor. v. 10).

The teaching of Scripture is that the saints are "chastened by the Lord" that they "should not be condemned" (or rather, judged, *κατακριθωμεν*) "with the world" (1 Cor. xi. 32). It is in this sense that "he that believeth shall not come into condemnation" (or judgment, *κρισιν*, John v. 24). Hence it is that the saints "judge the world" (1 Cor. vi. 2). Our correspondent is quite right in saying that Luke xxii. 30 relates only to the Apostles. *That* text ought not to have been cited. We are always grateful for corrections.

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at,—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints, as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine.*

BRITISH MUSEUM

ATONEMENT.

THE Atonement is *a great fact.* The philosophy of it is *a profound mystery.* It is with the fact alone that, as sinners, we have to do; the philosophy involved, we may safely leave to higher intelligences, and other states of being.

The word "atonement" occurs but once in our English version of the New Testament (Rom. v. 11), and there only through a mistranslation; for καταλλαγη

[Registered for transmission abroad.]

unquestionably ought to have been rendered, *reconciliation*. It is so rendered in other places (e. g. 2 Cor. v. 18, 19; Rom. xi. 15), and should have been in this also, since no argument whatever as to the *method* of reconcilement can honestly be founded upon it. To ordinary readers, "atonement" conveys the idea of *substitution by sacrifice*, and so far its use is, without question, misleading.

Other words, however, supposed to imply the doctrine in question, frequently present themselves, such as "propitiation," "oblation," and "sacrifice,"—words which, like the announcement of John the Baptist, "Behold *the Lamb* of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29), and the declaration of St. Paul, "Christ, *our passover*, is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. v. 7), become unintelligible, if they are not to be regarded, in some measure at least, in connection with the blood-shedding of the Old Testament economy.

Unhappily, theologians will not allow us to rest on Divine facts. They insist that it is as necessary to hold a true philosophy of the Atonement, as it is to believe in the fact of one. "The *doctrine*," says a recent prominent defender of the faith,* "is the *inference from the fact*, and without the doctrine the bare fact is nothing. The question is, to what end Christ's death effects its purpose? Upon our answer to this depends the nature of our religion."

It never seems to occur to such reasoners that the

* Rev. C. Hebert, M.A. in reply to Maurice, Davies, Jowett, and others.

revealed fact* is alone Divine; that all inferences deduced therefrom, true or false, are purely human; and that, therefore, on their theory, "the nature of our religion depends," not on the simple reception or otherwise of a Divine testimony, but on a purely logical process, which, owing to the unfitness of the human mind to deal with matters stretching into the infinite, is at least as likely to be wrong as right.

Into the various controversies that have arisen out of this perverse disposition to be "wise above that which is written," we shall decline to enter.

We assume, as undeniable, that the Old Testament prophets predict a coming Messiah, and that they describe Him in two aspects; first, and chiefly, as "a priest upon a throne," under whose glorious reign all nations shall be blessed; and, secondly, as a "man of sorrows," humiliated and suffering, yet not for any sin of His own (Jer. xxiii. 5; Isa. liii. 3—12).

The fortieth Psalm, taken, as it must be, in connection with its exposition in the Epistle to the Hebrews (x. 5—18), is, perhaps, of all these prophecies the most remarkable, since it gives us the reason for Christ's coming,—the inefficiency of the blood of bulls and of goats to take away sin; and the recall of the

* A SCRIPTURE FACT is, properly speaking, a revealed truth, dogmatically communicated; resting solely on the basis of the Divine authority; and viewed apart from any reasons for its predication, or any deductions which may be drawn from it. And this, be it observed, whether that which is revealed be an event, or whether it be what is usually termed a doctrine. (See Robert Hall's well-known sermon on "The glory of God in assuming a creature.")

coming,—the honouring of the law, "Lo, I come *to do* thy will, O God." "He taketh away the first" (sacrifice and offering), "that he may establish the second" (perfect obedience). To this remarkable prophecy, and its inspired exposition, we naturally look for an explanation of the facts of the Gospel history, so far, at least, as explanation is needful.

These facts are simple, and speak for themselves.

A Jewish maiden, miraculously conceiving by the Holy Ghost, becomes the mother of a child born without sin,—free from the slightest hereditary taint of evil. This child, subject to all the weaknesses and infirmities of humanity, grows up, like any other child, obedient to his parents, faultless in life, and marked by a moral thoughtfulness rapidly deepening into a wisdom far above his age.

For thirty years he lives in obscurity; toils, as other young men toil; and, so far as the sacred narrative informs us, is in no way distinguished from his cotemporaries, except by wisdom and goodness.

At length a great prophet,—John the Baptist,—appears, declaring himself to be the forerunner of Messiah, and calling on all men to repent, and be baptized into the belief and expectation of this great event. In obedience to the call Jesus approaches, is recognized by John in his true character, yet submits to the rite, and is by a voice from heaven proclaimed to the Baptist, the "beloved Son," in whom God is ever well pleased.

For three years more he moves about Judea, words of wisdom dropping like pearls from his lips, and miracles of beneficence thickening about his path. At length, betrayed by a familiar friend, he falls into the hands of his enemies, and finally expires in the agonies of a shameful and cruel death. The sun darkens at the sight, and an earthquake rends the veil of the temple, but *Gentiles* alone (the centurion and his band) fear greatly, and say, "Truly this was the Son of God" (Matt. xxvii. 51—54).

So far, and to the outward eye, nothing appears beyond *the advent* of a great prophet, and *the commission* of a great crime.

But this is not all. The teaching of Christ is as peculiar as His life. John, as we have before observed, announces Him as "*the Lamb* of God that taketh away the sin of the world;" Caiaphas, apparently unconscious of the weight of his words, utters a mysterious prophecy, "that it was expedient that (this) one man should die for the people" (John xviii. 14); He himself declares, that "after three days" He will "rise again;" His disciples have been taught that He but goes before, to send "gifts," to found "a kingdom," and "to prepare mansions" for His faithful followers; and yet the garden of Gethsemane is the scene of a mighty and mysterious struggle, and the cross is connected with the cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"*

* The question is, Were these words the cry of despair, or were they uttered *for the comfort* of the surrounding disciples, who were then and

Connecting these things with other revealed facts,—such as, that He came "to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. xx. 28); that He laid down His "life" for His "sheep" (John x. 15); that He shed His "blood" for "the remission of sins" (Matt. xxvi. 28); that He "redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Gal. iii. 13); that "with His stripes we are healed" (Isa. liii. 5); and that through eternity the song of the redeemed will be, "Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood" (Rev. v. 9),—nothing surely can be plainer than that He died *vicariously*,—for others; that He died *voluntarily*,—"I lay down my life of myself;" that death was most *unwelcome* to Him, and *submission* to the cross the severest of trials,—"Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" that all this pain, ignominy, and suffering *might have been avoided* by a wish,—"Thinkest thou not that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels;" and, finally, that there was such *a necessity* for the endurance, that under the united pressure of duty and love, "He sweat

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there to learn the true meaning of that Messianic and finally triumphant psalm (xxii. 1), *of which it forms the initial verse*, and *in which* they would find the explanation of all they witnessed. Whether the Lord repeated the whole psalm may be doubtful, but it is clear He said enough to enable His followers to do so. "Even at this day, to repeat in the same manner but the first line of a common hymn, would be understood as a reference to the whole."—*Coleridge*.

as it were great drops of blood" in resisting the temptation to avoid it.

All this we gather from the narrative; but there is no assertion that He was, in any sense whatever, *punished*,—that He endured anything at the hand of God as *a Divine infliction*,—or that He was ever looked upon by the Father in any character save that which really belonged to Him as the Holy and the Blest.

That He was, in a sense, "stricken of God and afflicted," is as certain as that He was made "perfect through sufferings" (Heb. ii. 10); that in all, He "bare our sins and carried our sorrows," is as true as that He redeemed us from Satan; that, without the endurance of this cruel and ignominious death,—without the actual laying down of His life, the shedding of His blood,—the work of redemption could not have been consummated, is a clearly revealed fact; but that this was the effect of "Divine anger," or that it was "necessary to the *avenging* of the violated law," is a conclusion which, whether true or false, is the result of human reasoning, and not the direct teaching of the Bible.

If it be said,—as it probably will,—"Why, then, did Christ die at all? Why was He, a sinless and unfallen being, ushered into a world of fallen creatures, and made subject to the consequences of a disobedience in which He had not participated?" Above all, "Why was He God as well as man?" We have not far to go for an answer.

To the *first* of these questions we reply, in the words of our Lord Himself,—"Even so, Father, because it

seemed good in thy sight." Enough is it for us to know that the Redeemer lived and loved, and suffered and died, *to do the will of God.*

Whether, in any sense, He *bore the penalty* of the violated law, we know not. Whether *vengeance* was *needed,* in order to its vindication before the universe, we do not presume to affirm. But of this we are quite sure, it required to be *obeyed.* Broken and dishonoured before all creation, vain were the penalties by which, in all ages, it has avenged itself on offenders, to restore the dignity it had lost. Obedience, perfect and sinless obedience, made manifest in the flesh, could alone restore it to honour. *This,* Christ achieved, and in achieving it, became to man a "second Adam," the head of a redeemed people, the Saviour of a lost and ruined world.

In relation to the *second* question, it is surely enough to observe, that no *creature* could *do for man* what Christ has done, or *be to man* what Christ is, without becoming the object of idolatry. It was needful that the work of redemption should be a Divine work,—that the deliverer of man should be his Creator,—that his Saviour should be his Judge; since He who secures, on man's behalf, *such* blessings,—who is *to him* "the way, the truth, and the life," and who obtains *for him* everything that renders life desirable, *could not* be other, either to the eye or to the heart, than an incarnate God; and if not the proper object of worship, would necessarily become to myriads the overpowering occasion of sin and shame.

To us it seems a strange conclusion that, because Christ came into the world *to die;* that because it is *His blood* which cleanseth from all sin; that because He is our "sacrifice," our "passover," and our "propitiation," *therefore* the virtue of His sacrifice lies in the *material blood* shed on Calvary; its efficacy, in the assumption that He died under the "anger of God;"* or that reconciliation with the Father was not *possible* without the crime and the cruelty of the wicked men, by whose evil agency the Lord of life was "crucified and slain." That it pleased God to admit this agency is certain; that Jesus was "delivered" into the hands of his murderers "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," is true also (Acts ii. 23); but that this wicked act had anything to do with the redemption of man, beyond consummating at once the Saviour's work and the judgment of the Jewish nation, is nowhere taught in Holy Writ.

Dean Alford has truly said,—"Never do we find in Scripture, Old Testament or New Testament, any such expression as the Father was *propitiated* concerning our sins, on account of *the death* of His Son; or, Christ *propitiated* God or God's wrath *by His blood;* never, God was reconciled." (Note on Heb. ii. 17.)

* Mr. Hebert puts the matter in the plainest form, when he says, "The death (of Christ) *under the frown of God*, under *the weight of His wrath*, due to me for my sin, is the great difference between us and the Socinians." (2nd Edit., pp. 80, 81.) We fearlessly assert, it is no such thing. An assertion so hasty and ill founded is calculated to do much mischief.

Why then should we *theorize* at all on a subject so much above us? Why should we be so afraid to admit that the sacrifice of the Redeemer, while in one sense *a counterpart*, is in another *a contrast* to those of the Old Testament economy; that it is at once the *substance* and the *supercession* of the sacrifice of animal life, by the higher sacrifice of the spirit,—"Thou shalt make *his soul* an offering for sin" (Isa. liii. 10); that it is the *putting away* of material blood to make room for the shedding of a life spent in holy and spotless obedience; that it is *the establishment* of, "Lo, I come to do thy will," in the place of mere deliverance from the *consequences* of sin by the substitution of a victim? "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Psa. li. 17). This surely is the sense in which Christ, "the perfect Son," becomes "the perfect sacrifice," and "the Saviour" of that mystical "body," the members of which He is ever drawing by His grace into sonship with Himself.

But we check ourselves, for we are on "holy ground." Good Richard Baxter truly says,—"The things of God are like snow, and man cannot touch them without leaving on them the print of his handling."

That a question should ever have arisen as to the *extent* of the Atonement,—that Christian men, with the Bible in their hands, and its plainest statements before them, should ever have ventured to assert that Christ died *only* for the elect,—that if He "bought" others, such "purchase" is for them "no ransom or

redemption, fairly so called,"—that He has bought them, only "that He may so dispose of them as to glorify the retributive righteousness of God in their condemnation,"*—that faith is the act of "*a new faculty*,"†—a Divine act, "implying the communication of a Divine *capacity*,"‡ and yet that all who do not possess it are irrecoverably lost,—is to us, one of the most melancholy proofs we have ever met with, of the tendency of the human mind to claim for its own weak and erring *inferences*, an authority which really belongs only to the direct teachings of God.

The true solution of the theological difficulty which has led to these sad aberrations from truth, will, we are satisfied, ultimately be found in the simple reception of the apostolic declarations to Timothy, when instructing him as to what he was to teach,—"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinners*, of whom I am chief" (1 Tim. i. 15); that "God our Saviour will have *all men* to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (ii. 4); and that while He is "the Saviour of all men," He is "*specially*" so "of those that believe" (iv. 10). *These* things, says the apostle to him, "command and teach" (iv. 11). A.

* Candlish on the Atonement, pp. 193, 194.

† *Ibid.* p. 379.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 388. We quote from Morison's Vindication.

SCRIPTURE.

Chapter VIII.—*On Hindrances arising from the* Projection *and consequent Perversion of Texts.*

WE regard Scripture as *projected*, when passages which relate to the apostles only, or to the miraculous state of things which obtained during the planting of the Christian Church, are used *as if they were intended* to apply to ourselves, or, at least, to institutions which had no existence when the words in question were uttered. That Scripture, when subjected to this process, becomes *perverted*, will be seen clearly enough when particular instances are brought under examination.

A few only can here be cited.

(1) "*Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*" (John iii. 5). The application of this text to *Christian* baptism is by no means uncommon; some maintaining therefrom the absolute necessity of *baptism by water* to salvation, while others, who shrink from the consequences involved in this conclusion, affirm that through baptism alone can any man become a member of Christ's Church, or a partaker of "covenanted" blessing.

Yet nothing can be clearer than that when these words were uttered, *Christian* baptism was unknown; that they refer *exclusively* to the baptism of John; and that the lesson they were intended to teach was, that Christ must

be openly acknowledged, as well as inwardly believed in; that confession before man, whatever reproach or danger might thereby be incurred, was essential to discipleship; and that the conduct of Nicodemus, and that of the class he represented (for he came as a representative man), was incompatible with fidelity (Luke vii. 30; John xii. 42, 43).

(2) "*Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you*" (John vi. 53). These words, with others that precede and follow, are ordinarily regarded as applying to the "Holy Communion;" some (as the Romanists) founding thereupon, in connection with the later Institute of the Redeemer, the doctrine of Transubstantiation, and others (as the High Lutherans and Anglicans) that of Consubstantiation.

Where, however, we may well ask, is the connection to be traced between the conversation here recorded and the subsequent appointment of the Lord's Supper? As no such ordinance *then* existed, it is utterly impossible that those who heard Christ speak *could* have imagined anything of the kind. Nor does His teaching imply it. The comparison instituted is between "the meat which perisheth" (v. 27), and that "which endureth to everlasting life" (v. 49, 50); and the lesson imparted would have been just as important and intelligible as it now is, had the Eucharist never been instituted. It was the revelation of that new and wondrous Life,—"life unto life," which, greater than the life He gives "unto the world," they, and they only, enjoy, who become *here* spiritually united to the Redeemer by a living faith, and to whom His flesh and His blood,—His life and His death,—are as "manna" to support, and as "wine" to gladden and refresh. This doctrine naturally

appeared to many of the disciples,—then very imperfectly acquainted with His nature and dignity,—so monstrous, that they could not bear the saying, but "went back and walked no more with Him" (v. 66).

To pretend, as some have done, in order to support High Sacramentarianism, that those who went away were *revolted* at what they considered a sort of cannibalism, is either dishonesty, or *unmitigated folly*. The Jews were conversant with the imagery Christ employed (Ezek. iii. 1—3), and *could* not, therefore, mistake His meaning; the response of Peter clearly shows that the twelve understood Him aright, for when asked, "Will ye also go away?" they reply at once, "To whom shall we go? Thou hast *the words* of eternal life" (v. 68). He had Himself just told them, "The flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (v. 63). We ourselves colloquially employ very similar language when we bid men not only "mark and learn," but 'inwardly *digest*" Divine truth. There is nothing whatever in the text to justify *even the association* of this discourse with the Supper, however strongly that institution may recall and illustrate its teaching. *Projection* here leads inevitably to *perversion*.

(3) "*The prayer of faith shall save the sick*" (Jas. v. 15). There can be no doubt that this text is often regarded as *a promise;* that expectations of the recovery of sick persons are frequently founded upon it; and that, when disappointment follows, a painful sense of doubt comes over the soul, although concealed, as much as possible, by exclamations on the inscrutable and mysterious providence of God.

But is it given *to us* as *a promise?* Certainly not. The

context clearly shows that it applies only to *a certain class of sick*—those who were *judicially* punished by sickness for special sin. The reference to Elias, as having by his prayer brought rain, is alone *proof* that a special and not an ordinary state of things was in the mind of the apostle (see 1 Cor. v. 3—5). Paul says nothing about special prayer for Trophimus, whom he leaves sick; and while he gratefully acknowledges the mercy of God in raising up Epaphroditus, lest he should be crushed by over much sorrow, he receives his recovery, not as an anticipated reply to the prayer of faith, but as a sovereign and unexpected mercy. Absolute and happy *acquiescence* in the Divine will is always our duty, and should be one of our highest privileges.

(4) "*When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth*" (John xvi. 13). Here, again, we have words spoken *to the apostles* which are commonly, *by projection*, applied to ourselves. But, it will be said, Do they not so apply? One would think it was enough to answer by asking two other questions,—*First.* Are we, *as a fact*, in the present day, guided by the Holy Spirit "into all truth"? Or,—explain it as we may,—are we left to flounder amid errors of all kinds, quarrelling perpetually about religion, almost doubting whether any reply can be obtained to the question,—*What is truth?*

Then, *secondly*, Were the apostles guided, in such a sense, and to such a degree, that they were thereby qualified to be the teachers of mankind through all ages? *Most assuredly they were.* Why, then, should we doubt the true application of the text? As well might we say that the Spirit brings to OUR "remembrance all things what-

soever" that Christ taught when He was on earth, or that He shows *us* "things to come" (John xiv. 26; xvi. 13).

It is surely a blessed thing *to know* that the inspired teachers of the Church were directly and authoritatively taught of God; but to imagine that WE are thus instructed is to destroy the value of Scripture altogether, by claiming for ourselves communications from heaven of a character which, *if real*, cannot be other than infallible. When shall we learn that the action of the Spirit of God on the mind of man, if direct, is *inspiration*, whether the recipient be a good or a bad man,—a Balaam or a Paul? All other light is simply moral, enlightening the mind *only by and through* the purification of the heart,—and this, whether the man thus "filled by the Holy Ghost" be a Stephen, an Augustine, a Luther, or an English peasant. To all such the voice of Scripture is,—"If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." He that "*doeth* the will of God shall know of the doctrine." The fruits of the Spirit are "love, joy, and peace," not *mental* illumination, except in so far as these Divine qualities necessarily produce it. Too long have we fancied that the Spirit of God will enlighten us, *in spite of* a want of ordinary perception, and, still more frequently, *in spite of* cherished prejudices, bigotry, and want of candour. Little need is there, under such circumstances, for our marvelling that Inspiration should be so little understood, or that it is so often confounded with genius or spiritual intuition.

The only text that, *superficially viewed*, seems to justify the ordinary application, is 1 John ii. 20, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things," on which Dean Alford justly remarks, "The expression explains itself, as referring to all things needful for right action in

the matter under consideration,"—"the ability to detect antichrists" (v. 18, 19). The "unction" (χρισμα) is love and purity, which, as we have already said, is the means and weapon by which alone error can be detected and resisted.

(5) "*If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three (of you) are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them*" (Matt. xviii. 19, 20).

"I hesitate not" (says the Professor of Theology in the Free Church College, Aberdeen) "to build upon this promise the following proposition: That the more extensively *we can organize an agreement* among all that love the Lord Jesus to ask for specific things in prayer, and the more symphonious those prayers are, the more assuredly will those things be done for us of His Father which is in heaven." Hence *money* is raised and *machinery* created to secure what are called "concerts" in prayer.

We should be the last to discourage social and united supplication for mercies of any kind, but we cannot help asking, *Is there no mistake here?* If the words quoted apply to Christians generally, those which immediately precede them *must do so too;* and in that case, any Christian community meeting as "a Church" may say, "Whatsoever (we) bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever (we) loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (v. 18).

Again, "James and John" *did* agree together to ask our Lord touching a request, and they put it in these words,—"Master, *we* would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire;" but the only answer they

received was, "Ye know not what ye ask" (Mark x. 35—45). Yet the request was a *spiritual* one, for although the ten were angry with their two brethren for putting it, the Lord was not. He does not rebuke the petitioners, but *the ten*, for their want of charity and humility in misjudging the two sons of Zebedee. Still, as we have already seen, *it was not granted.* What can be clearer than that the promise under our notice related *exclusively* to matters essential to the apostles in the accomplishment of their work as His inspired servants?

To us it is said,—"Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask we receive of Him, *because we keep His commandments*, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight" (1 John iii. 21, 22). And again,—"And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, *if we ask anything according to His will*, He heareth us. And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that (in the highest and best sense) we have the petitions that we desired of Him" (1 John v. 14, 15).

We very much doubt whether there is any reason to believe that, *as a fact*, God listens with more regard to united prayer than to solitary supplication; that Christ is, *in any higher sense*, present in the large assembly than in the lonely closet of the believer; or that, as we are now, although in various phrase, perpetually told, "the avenues of God's grace to man are narrowed," because Christians do not meet in crowds to pray. We find no such teaching in the New Testament; we look in vain for examples in support of this view to the early annals of the Church; and we are quite sure that the text under our notice cannot fairly be interpreted in its support.

We might multiply these examples to almost any extent, were it desirable so to do. Errors of all kinds are grafted on these interpretations. Passages relating to the Jewish sabbath are in this way unscrupulously applied, without the slightest authority, to the Christian's Lord's day; texts relating only to the successive priests of the Levitical law (such as Heb. v. 4) are quoted in support of "an order" which has no such pretensions; exhortations to submission founded on the possession of extraordinary gifts, apostolic choice, or, it may be, inspired qualifications (Heb. xiii. 7, 17), are applied in relation to men who are in no way whatever distinguished above others, except by the possession of an "office," to which they have been presented or elected by mortals as fallible as themselves; and claims, the most transcendental, involving the power of giving the Holy Ghost, of binding and loosing, and even of remitting or retaining sin, are supported and defended by perversions of Scripture not one whit more respectable than those which are constantly brought forward in defence of Romish superstitions.

Abuses of this kind are now, unhappily, so common, that they excite but little attention, and, when noticed, are generally regarded as unimportant. We trust, however, that the day is coming when these things will be endured no longer; when it will be thought as unjustifiable in interpreting Scripture to project the past into the present, as it is to reverse the process, by insisting, as many do, that *the echo* of the New Testament is *the voice* of the Old, and that the entire Gospel pervades alike the Psalms, the Proverbs, the Song of Solomon, and the histories of the Jewish kings.

D.

CHURCH PRINCIPLES.

THE MIDDLE TERM.

WE have already noticed the two sets of "Church Principles," which, as we think, are now, although under many disguises, really contending for the mastery. Nor does the fact that a third set exists, supported by a party, embracing in its ample range nearly all Protestants who regard themselves as in a peculiar sense *Evangelical*, at all alter this conviction. For, excellent and influential as the Evangelical body is, whether in England or elsewhere, it can scarcely be denied that, *in relation to Church matters*, its action as a rule is evasive and compromising. It always *evades* difficulties, and it frequently *compromises* duty.

This party, amid every variety of opinion, holds in the main that the polity of the Church, and the ministry of Christ, so far as appointment is concerned, is, to a great extent, "a matter of temporary and variable expediency." Such persons may profess, as they frequently do, *theories* which are absolutely irreconcilable with this view; but, in spite of all, they manage, sometimes as ministers of the Church of England, and sometimes as Nonconformists, so far to harmonize their differences, that *within* the fold, men who are called in controversy "unconverted,"—"Roman-

ists,"—"infidels,"* are, by the same persons, recognized as God's ministers; while *out of the pale*, others are loved and honoured, on the ground that a true faith overrides mere order, and that a common love to Christ is of far more consequence than any uniformity in Church organization. We can understand a High Churchman doing *the first* of these things, since his "principle" obliges him to regard *appointment* as the chief element in ministry. We can understand a Low Churchman doing *the last*, for with him evidence of conversion and love to the Master naturally take precedence of ecclesiastical order. The peculiarity of the present day is, that *the same man does both*. It seems to us that, under such circumstances, duty, on the one side or on the other, *must* be compromised.

"Occasional conformity" on the part of Dissenters, and attempts at union on a basis like that of "the Evangelical Alliance," although necessarily proceeding on a conviction, more or less deep, that no particular form of Church order and discipline is *positively enforced* in Scripture; that "love," ecclesiastically as well as morally, is "the fulfilling of the law," are yet not to be classed with the inconsistencies of which we speak; for, to a certain extent, combinations of this kind may be perfectly compatible with adherence to a fixed principle.

We do not dispute either the honesty or the truthfulness of those who regard "the Articles" of the Church of England rather as articles of comprehension than of exclusion, and who, therefore, view "subscription" as a requirement intended rather to "keep the peace," than to promote

* *E. g.*, the *Record* newspaper, and other periodicals, on Jowett, Maurice, Pusey, and others; also the "*Rivulet*" controversy.

attempts to unite,—that of regarding Romanists, members of the Greek Church, High Lutherans, English Tractarians, and Quakers, as, with very few exceptions, unconverted persons, while they in turn, or at least most of them, exclude us from the true Church and "covenanted" mercies,—is so dreadful, and involves such tremendous falsehood on both sides, that it may well be questioned whether any manifestation of oneness which requires even the *recognition* of a theory of this character, is not worse than the simple acknowledgment that, till the Church is radically changed, it must be regarded as *invisible*,—united, secretly, by common love to a common Lord, but utterly incapable of being recognized by mortal eye as the "*fulness* of Him that filleth all in all."

Instead, therefore, of wasting our time in unavailing regrets that such diversities should exist; instead of evading our differences, by calling them unimportant, or refusing to consider them; instead of compromising truth and love together, by quietly anathematizing those who hold the errors we are anxious to disavow; let us "arise," and go to "our Father," and in the spirit, not of sectarianism, but of a broad and expansive charity, ask His guidance; calmly and with unwearied patience reasoning out of the Scriptures in defence of the "liberty" wherewith Christ has "made us free;" and willing, if truth demands, *to bow* even to Rome itself. In no other way shall we ever arrive either at Love or Unity. E.

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[*All communications for the Editor should be addressed to* No. 14, Bartholomew Close, Aldersgate Street, London, E.C.]

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at,—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints, as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine.*

BRITISH MUSEUM

ELECTION.

DIVINE choice, or "Election," as it is usually termed, although *implied* from the beginning in the Scriptures of THE OLD TESTAMENT, is nowhere distinctly asserted until Moses, in the book of Deuteronomy, affirms it of the people of Israel,—"The Lord thy God hath *chosen* thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth" (Deut. vii. 6).

K

[Registered for transmission abroad.]

The *purpose* and *peculiarity* of the choice is involved in the declaration of *the fact.* It is election *to service.* The Israelites are to be "a special people unto the Lord, *above*" (but not to the exclusion of) others; they are,—as is subsequently revealed,—to be "witnesses" to the Divine unity (Isa. xliv. 8); publishers "to the sons of men of God's mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom" (Psa. cxlv. 10—12); and they are to become eventually the channel through which mercy should be extended to all nations (Gen. xxvi. 3, 4; xlix. 10; Isa. xlix. 6). But there is nothing to show that it was ever the design of God to save *them only,* and to abandon the rest of the world to ruin. Even their final restoration,—come when and how it may,—is distinctly declared to have other and higher ends than their own benefit. "Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel" (Ezek. xxxvi. 32).

In the NEW TESTAMENT, Election becomes *a doctrine.* The Elect *there,* whoever they may be, and whether many or few, are spoken of as persons peculiarly *dear to God* (Mark xiii. 20; Luke xviii. 7); who shall be *preserved from apostacy* under every form of seduction or fiery trial to which the saints shall be subjected (Mark xiii. 22; Rev. xiii. 8); who are the *special objects of apostolic solicitude* (2 Tim. ii. 10; Titus i. 1); and who shall finally be *gathered by the angels* from the four winds of heaven into the garner of God (Mark xiii. 27); while Election itself, as distinguished from

"calling" (Matt. xx. 16), is said to be a *sovereign gift* (Rom. ix. 15, 16; 1 Cor. i. 27, 28),—*personal* (1 Thess. i. 4; 2 Tim. ii. 19),—*limited* (Matt. xx. 23; Rom. xi. 7),—*absolute* (Rom. ix. 11), and *eternal* (Ephes. i. 4); yet needing to be made "sure" (2 Pet. i. 10), since it is *to sanctification*, or setting apart for Divine service (2 Thess. ii. 13), *to holiness* of heart and life (Ephes. i. 4; Col. iii. 12), and *to office* (1 Pet. ii. 9). It is in relation to office, and *to office only*, that the term "Elect" is applied to Christ (Isa. xlii. 1; Matt. xii. 18; 1 Pet. ii. 6);—To Angels (1 Tim. v. 21);—To David (2 Sam. vi. 21; Psa. lxxviii. 70); and to the Apostles (John xv. 16—19).

We gather from the whole, that Election is a privilege granted to some, but not to all; that its object is special service; that it in no way whatever interferes with the condition of others, excepting in so far as it improves that condition by providing for them further instruction; that, in short, its one distinguishing characteristic is mercy, *grafted on* mercy,—*favour* to the few, that by and through their agency its blessings might be extended to the many; just as God includes "*all*" (whether Jew or Gentile) "in unbelief, *that He might have mercy upon all.* O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out" (Rom. xi. 32, 33).

We have already said that an "Election of grace," in some sense or other, is *implied* from the beginning

of the Old Testament. Abel, Seth, Enoch, and Noah, were obviously, in the Divine eye, "chosen and precious" in a sense which did not, and could not, belong to the men by whom "the earth was filled with violence." On such, as the appointed heads of their families or tribes,—"sons of God" (Gen. vi. 2), as distinguished from the unrighteous seed,—devolved the preservation of purity and love upon the earth, in connection with the worship and service of the one true God.

Nor is it easy to conceive of such an Election,—if so it may be called,—as other than personal; for it was as *individuals* these men feared God above many; and it was in their individual character that they acted as guides and examples to those among whom their lot was cast. We see no impropriety in regarding these antediluvians as the subjects of *the first*, or primitive election.

The covenant made with Abraham indicates, if we may so say, the commencement of *the second* election; and it differs from the earlier one chiefly in its *national* character. For the covenant is made, not with Abraham only, but with his seed after him; *they*, rather than he, being the destined inheritors of Canaan, the depositaries of Divine truth, and the future lights of the world. It is the election of a whole people, through all their generations, to be, in a peculiar sense, "the people of God," a "holy nation," a community of "kings and priests" to all around.

That the Jewish nation was *set apart*, by this solemn

act of choice, to be the rulers and teachers of the rest of the world, cannot be doubted. Their miraculous history, —miraculous from its commencement to its close; their instinctive consciousness of a regal destiny,—a consciousness still clinging to them as closely as ever; their marvellously unworldly institutions,—such especially as the sabbatic year,—all testify to the fact that God *intended* them to enjoy pre-eminence, as the best men of that period of the world's history.

Nor should it be forgotten, while perusing that dark record of their folly and crime which it has pleased God to stereotype for use in all ages, that while no other people ever had their inner life so faithfully depicted, or their faults so unsparingly disclosed, the nation, *as a nation*, during by far the greater part of its existence, was *immeasurably* superior to any other people then existing; and that its representative men, its kings and warriors, its prophets and its priests, its heads of families and well-conducted households, were really the *élite* of the world, and the "salt of the earth," as it then was. Who can read David's heart-stirring comparison between the pure and cheerful worship of Jehovah, perpetually celebrating on Mount Zion, and the horrid and foul rites of the surrounding nations, without feeling how righteous was the scorn which made him exclaim, "Their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips"? Who can think of the *peaceful joy* that so often breathes in the Psalms, that was echoed in the temple, that lingered on the hill-sides of Judea, and

that abode in "the tabernacles of the righteous," without feeling how vast was the distance that intervened between the moral condition of the Jew, and that even of the most philosophic and accomplished Gentile?

Still they *failed* as a people to answer the end God had designed them to accomplish; they neglected to make "their calling and election *sure;*" and, finally, like Esau of old, they cast away "*their birthright,*" never again to find it, even though it should be sought "carefully and with tears" (Heb. xii. 17).

Spiritually indeed, and in relation to individuals,—for then, as now, "all" were "not Israel," who were "of Israel" (Rom. ix. 6),—the covenant was unchangeable, and so, one after another, the holy men of old "died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off," and assured that in "the better country," to which they were hastening, every word of God would find a glorious fulfilment. But, *as a whole,* and in relation to the purpose for which it was designed, we repeat, the Jewish election must be termed a failure,—so far at least as we may venture, without irreverence, thus to speak of a transaction in which God, to our short-sighted conceptions, appears to allow His intentions to be thwarted by human perversity.

The *third and final election,*—that under the Gospel, which, be it observed, proceeds on precisely the same principle as the earlier ones,—viz., the setting apart of the noblest and the best for special

service,—dates from the advent of the Redeemer, and, like the Jewish, has a twofold character; *externally*, embracing all professors of Christianity, however feeble their faith, or however inconsistent their conduct; but *spiritually*, and in a deeper sense, including only the highest and purest among the children of men.

St. Paul clearly indicates this when he addresses, as "elect," *all* the members of a Church which contained, at that very time, in its fellowship, some who denied the resurrection of the dead, and others who lived in flagrant sin (1 Cor. v.); St. Peter, when he tells us that "Election" is a "calling" which has to be made "sure" (2 Pet. i. 10); and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, when he speaks of the possibility of a falling away of persons whom it is "impossible" to "renew again unto repentance" (Heb. vi. 6).

In no case, however, as some have thought, is the Divine choice represented as proceeding on the assumption that the persons elected *merit* distinction, or are chosen on account of *foreseen* goodness; *in all* the choice is regarded as made for reasons which are *reserved* in the Divine mind. Hence we very properly speak of it as *sovereign*,—not meaning by that term anything arbitrary or capricious, but simply using the phrase as descriptive of an act commenced and completed for reasons which are concealed from us.

Yet, *not altogether so;* for while nothing is told us which explains, or is intended to explain, *why* this individual is taken, and that left, the general principle embodied is, as we are distinctly informed, the ultimate

elevation of the many by and through the agency of the few. On this point Scripture is explicit,—"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," says St. Paul, who hath "predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,"—"*that in the dispensation*" ("economy," so Alford) "*of the fulness of times* He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him" (Ephes. i. 3—10).

Election then, regarded in its twofold character, is, like the Church itself, visible, and invisible; *visible*, in so far as it externally embraces all who "profess and call themselves" Christians; *invisible*, so far as it relates to the truly regenerate,—to those who, in the words of the Apostle John, are born, "not of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

It is in this *latter* sense alone that the elect Church is the "Bride of Christ," for none but the "regenerate,"—and we clearly distinguish these from the merely "converted,"—can share in the throne and the priesthood of the risen Saviour. *Who* these are it is not for us to inquire. Hidden at present from mortal eye, they will one day be owned and made manifest before an assembled world, as the best, the noblest, the most Christ-like souls earth, with all its discipline, and heaven, with all its love, can fashion and bring forth.

Lawful enough it may be for us, in our ignorance, to *hope* that we ourselves, and those whom we see around

us in the daily Christian intercourse of life,—with whose prayers we mingle our own, and with whom we enjoy the fellowship alike of human love and Church communion,—*all* belong to that blessed company; for, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, it is not fitting that we should form any other judgment. But it is not really so. Only a part are chosen to honour. For, God's elect, did we know them, would be found even now *worthy of their name*, and very different from those who only perplex us by their inconsistencies, or plague us by their folly.

Loving, trustful, and unselfish; broad in their sympathies, candid in their judgments, honourable in their lives, and humble in the estimate they form of themselves, *these*, the true sons and daughters of the Highest, will one day issue from the obscurity in which it pleases God as yet to hide them, and "*they shall walk in white, for they are worthy.*" From deepest poverty and peasants' huts,—with here and there, it may be, one from the palaces of princes; from lonely prisons, and from martyrdoms severer than those of the axe or the stake; cultured, or rude of speech; great souls of whom the world knows nothing, will then come forth,—"a multitude which no man can number," and stand confessed God's own nobility the aristocracy of the skies.

That the rest of the professing Church will be *saved*, we doubt not. For to be "saved" is one thing, but to be a king and a priest to God and to Christ is quite another thing. To be "forgiven" is *much;* but to

hold rank among the sanctified is far more. The one may consist with the ambitions of this world; the other, *even now*, has no heartfelt affinities with anything that does not more or less bear on the world that is to come.

Let us not be told that this is "another Gospel," differing from that which Christ revealed, and His apostles taught. It is no such thing. Judgment by works is as distinctly revealed in Scripture as justification by faith, and it is but a miserable theology which allows the one to supersede the other. *What connection* may, in any case, subsist between godliness and election, eminent holiness and Divine choice, we do not profess to know; but that such a connection *really exists*, and under conditions which involve no injustice to any one, we cannot for a moment doubt. Far, however, from tending to limit the Divine mercy, its aim and end is a fuller and more glorious manifestation of that wondrous love, the height and depth and length and breadth of which it is impossible to measure.

Diversities of condition, we are also distinctly taught (1 Cor. xv. 41), will be as characteristic of the world (or age) that is to come, as they are of this; yet, then as now, each will receive, not less, but far more than he deserves; and each, whatever he may have to lose or to suffer, as the just penalty of folly or of sin, will be obliged to admit that "the Judge of the whole earth" does "*right*."

Looking forward to that glorious period,—the day of Christ, and the resurrection of the body,—the elect,

under the symbolic title of Elders, are presented to us in the apocalyptic vision as already exercising priestly functions,—holding censers full of odours,—and filling heaven with anticipative praise, "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and *we shall* REIGN *on the earth.*"

Without the recognition of the twofold salvation,—that of the elect,—the "kings" who are to "reign with Christ," and that of "the world," who are to be subjects in the kingdom, it seems impossible to reconcile the "strait gate," the "narrow way," and the "few there be that find it," with the various promises which speak of the kingdoms of this world becoming "the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ," of the cessation of all strife,—"the lion lying down with the lamb,"—and of the knowledge of the Lord covering the earth, "as the waters cover the sea."

Regarded as these passages usually are,—all alike made to apply to the same class, they leave the impression of a *total contrast,* if not of inexplicable contradiction. Viewed, as we think they should be, separately and apart; the *former* regarded as relating to the elect alone,—the *special result* of this dispensation; the *latter,* as referring to the ultimate condition of *the race as a whole,* they fully harmonize; for they then intimate that "the completed salvation of the elect

Church, instead of closing the fountains of Divine love, only introduces a wider and fuller display of it; "that, for aught we know, "there may be a thousand stages and varieties of union with Christ distinguishable from the glory of the elect Church;"* that as God, "*at the first*, visited the Gentiles, *to take out of them a people* for His name" (Acts xv. 14), so, at last, through that visitation of mercy, will Christ eventually secure "the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession;" that as by the fall of the chosen people, the Gentiles were enriched, so, in their fulness, shall "all Israel be saved;" and the cross, so long "a stumbling-block to the Jew," and "folly to the Greek," shall become at length the centre of the world's attraction, and the word of the Redeemer be verified,—"*I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.*" A.

MODERN THEOLOGY.

"LET it be assumed that each separate article of our creed is well warranted by Scripture; it may notwithstanding be true that indefinite misconceptions, affecting the Divine character and government, or that certain modes of feeling generated in evil days, and still uncorrected, exist, and operate to benumb the impulsive and expansive energies of the Gospel. Our interpretation of Christianity may be good, and may be pure enough for private use; it may be good in the closet, good as the source of the motives of common life, and good as the ground of hope in death, and yet may be altogether unfit for conquest and triumph. That it is so unfit, should be assumed as the only pious and becoming explication we can give of the almost universal ignorance and irreligion of mankind."—*Fanaticism, by Isaac Taylor.*

* Rev. Edw. Bickersteth. See also, Birks's "Outlines of Prophecy," pp. 141, 143, 147, &c.

SCRIPTURE.

Chapter IX. — *On Hindrances arising from the* Exaggeration *of Scripture.*

BY the *exaggeration* of Scripture we understand the use of passages in a sense stronger than that they were originally *intended* to bear; whether such "adding to" the Divine testimony,—for it is nothing less,—arise from *mistranslation*, from the erroneous *interpretation of imagery*, or from general misconception as to the *limits* under which any given statement is to be received.

The misfortune is that these exaggerations prevail most on subjects in relation to which it is of all others important that the exact line of truth should not be overstepped; that they are often winked at, if not encouraged, from an over anxiety to produce immediate and salutary impression; and that commonly all discussion in relation to them is deprecated, on the ground that, as men are already far too little affected by the evil of sin, and far too careless respecting its consequences, anything which *seems* to lessen the terribleness of disobedience, even though it should be by the removal of error, must be practically injurious.

The result, in accordance with that great law of retribution which operates as surely in religion as in everything else, is, that at the present time infidelity plants its foot

on these very exaggerations as the first step to confirmed unbelief, and insinuates that, as a rule, the assertions of the pulpit and the calm conclusions of the scholar do not harmonize; that truth, both in books and sermons, is commonly sacrified to *effect;* that things are not exactly as they are represented; and that the most alarming appeals may be divested of much of their power by a careful examination of the words in which they are embodied, and the texts by which they are enforced. So true is it that exaggeration,—whatever may be its immediate effect,—invariably *weakens* the cause it is intended to support.

It is because we have no faith whatever in any of the mitigative theories about the Divine threatenings which are from time to time brought forward to meet objectors to the plain declarations of Scripture, that we maintain the absolute necessity of neither adding one word, nor striking off one particle, from the testimony of Revelation. And it is under the deepest sense of responsibility that we now venture to call attention to some of the many passages of Scripture which we think are frequently thus distorted.

(1) "*Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men*" (2 Cor. v. 11). This text, which is frequently brought forward to justify what are called "alarming" sermons, is the stronghold of men who, with the best intentions, but with mischievous results, are continually denouncing sinners as "in the hands of an angry God," every hour on the brink of endless and unutterable woe.

Yet the Apostle does not really refer to the *terror* of the Lord at all. What he says is this,—"Knowing (or, sensible of) the fear of God, we persuade *men*, and are made manifest to *God*." The word used for fear, and wrongly

translated "terror," is precisely the same word as that which he uses a little further on (vii. 1), in the passage, "Perfecting holiness in the *fear* of God." Dean Alford interprets the text thus,—"Being conscious of the fear of the Lord, we are free from double dealing," and that is no doubt what the Apostle means.

(2) "*For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt*" (Mark ix. 49).

Nearly all the older commentators assert, although without the slightest warrant, that the phrase, "salted with fire," is intended to apply to wicked men, who will be "seasoned with fire itself, so as to become inconsumable, and to endure for ever, in order to be eternally tormented." Baxter is, however, an exception, as he considers the fire intended to be that of "affliction on earth."

The context, if carefully examined, demonstrates that this is the true meaning. Our Lord had been teaching *the disciples*,—for it is to them He is speaking, that, as in cases of gangrene, it is frequently necessary to lose parts of the body in order to preserve life, so, in relation to the soul, it is needful to cut off, at whatever cost, *everything* that would, if not thus separated, occasion eternal ruin.

What more natural after this than the *unexpressed*, but not unfelt inquiry on the part of the disciples, "Why such severity?" The words that follow supply the answer,—"For" (because) "every one" (who enters my kingdom) "shall be salted with fire" (purified by discipline); "and every sacrifice" (as under the Old Testament dispensation) "shall be salted with salt"—seasoned with grace,—incorruptible, Col. iv. 6 (to render it acceptable; see Lev. ii. 13). He, therefore, who will not submit to this purifying

process, who will not consent to the removal of *all* that hinders life and growth in the soul, *chooses* death rather than life, and practically prefers the loathsomeness of corruption to eternal purity and blessedness. Then follows the exhortation (ver. 50),—"Have salt" (wisdom and grace) "in yourselves, and have peace one with another." For the conversation had originated in a dispute as to who should be the greatest.

Romanism is *a religion of terror*, and its priests find purgatorial flames far too profitable to be abandoned; but it is very sad to see those who ought to know better thus perverting the words of infinite and eternal love.

(3) "*Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings*" (Isa. xxxiii. 14).

Every one knows that these words are constantly used as if they referred to the punishment of sinners in the world to come; yet not a single commentator of any repute ventures so to interpret them. Matthew Henry, who in this case represents others, shows clearly enough that the fire referred to was that occasioned by the Assyrian army, and that no reference whatever is made to the world to come. Dean Alford (in a note on Mark ix. 49) seems to think that in any case the fire is to be regarded as purifying, since the answer to the question is,—"He that walketh in righteousness," he alone can endure these calamities, because he sees the hand of God in all.

On such a text as Mark ix. 44,—"Where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched," considering its awful import, we would rather say no more than this. It is a quotation from Isaiah (lxvi. 24), where the words are

used, not in connection with living and sensitive beings, but with dead carcases. Read, therefore, in the sense in which Isaiah wrote them,—the sense, as we believe, in which Christ quoted them,—they fully harmonize with other passages of Scripture, which teach that the wilfully impenitent *lose* all the blessedness of eternal life, *endure* all the pangs of the "second death," whatever that may mean, and *become* eternally loathsome, "an abhorring to all flesh."

What right have we to change the meaning altogether, and turn "the worm" into remorse of conscience, and "the unquenchable fire" into the undying torment of the sinner who is cast into it? We may think we *deepen* thereby the horrors of eternal woe, and by that process *deter* men from sin. Greatly is it to be feared that by these devices we but pave the way for the advances of Popery and Infidelity.

(4) "*But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment*" (Matt. xii. 36).

It was in consequence of misconceiving the true object of this saying of our Lord that the Puritans in England, and the Covenanters in Scotland, inculcated a severity of manners which has, often very unjustly, laid them open to the charge of hypocrisy. *They* thought that Christ spake of the many trivial observations and levities which, especially among the young, mark social intercourse in all parts of the world, and so they frowned upon all mirth, however innocent. But this was not the case. True indeed it is that a man's *responsibility* extends to every action he performs, every word he utters, and every thought he encourages. Nor would it be difficult to show that on any

other supposition responsibility itself would be altogether destroyed. Still, as we have just said, this is not the meaning of the passage under consideration.

The warning of the Lord, from the context, is evidently directed against the senseless accusation of the Pharisees, —"This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils." The charge was but an idle one,— a mere malicious taunt,—for they did not believe what they asserted. Yet the accusation, notwithstanding its levity, involved the sin of blasphemy. In like manner profane oaths, in which the most awful denunciations are frequently expressed without the slightest intention of affixing any serious meaning to the phrases uttered, are "idle words," which fall under the special condemnation of the text.

(5) "*I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway*" (1 Cor. ix. 27). So writes the Apostle, and many tell us that he here intimates that, so far from being assured that he was Christ's, he trembles, lest, after all his labours and sufferings, he should fall into some sensual snare and be eternally lost. But this is not his meaning. What Paul really felt so anxious to secure was (notwithstanding all its sorrows and trials), *the continuance of his Apostleship*. He disciplines himself, lest carelessness should lead to a fall of any kind, by which his character would be injured, and he become thereby a vessel unfit for the Master's use. "Know ye not," he says, "that they which run in a race *run all*, but *one* receiveth *the prize*. So run that ye may obtain" (ver. 24).

Instead of furnishing more instances, we proceed now merely to observe generally,—

(1) That it is an exaggeration to expound passages of Scripture which declare the total depravity of man, as if they were intended to teach that every one of his thoughts and feelings are by nature base and bad; that *all* men in the sight of God are *equally* wicked; or that the children of Adam are actually destitute of everything that can be spoken of as morally lovely. Scripture says no such thing. It speaks only of man's natural destitution of all that is worthy the name of *holiness;* of everything that could serve for his justification in the sight of God.

(2) It is a similar exaggeration to talk as if every person, young or old, was bound to consider or to speak of himself as "the *chief* of sinners," because the Apostle Paul, reflecting on the melancholy fact that he had once been a persecutor of the Church of Christ, so designates his own condition. By the phrase in question St. Paul simply gives us to understand that he regarded his own lot as *special*, his sin as *peculiar*, and his filling the office of an Apostle as a more *wonderful* display of mercy than any other man could boast of. Such expressions, when they occur in the diaries of persons who, by Divine grace, have been singularly preserved from temptation to evil, always involve more or less of *unreality*.

(3) It is but an exaggeration to say, as many of the old divines used to do, that "sin is an *infinite* evil, and deserves an *infinite* punishment, because it is committed against an infinite God." No such method of making men sensible of the aggravated character of their guilt is sanctioned by the Word of God. It is there deemed enough to say, and with a far deeper impressiveness, "that it is an evil and a bitter" thing to sin against God (Jer. ii. 19); that "it is a fearful thing" (by rebellion and impenitence) "to fall

into the hands of the living God" (Heb. x. 31); that the great aggravation of human guilt is, that it is always committed against a law of love. "For this," because it is contrary to the law of love, "Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal" (Rom. xiii. 8, 9).

(4) The broad distinction usually drawn between the Old and New Testament dispensations, relative to rewards and punishments, is usually an exaggerated one. It is not true to assert, as is frequently done, that the retributions threatened to the Jew were temporal, while those of the Christian are eternal; for it would probably be found, if the secret histories of Christian men could be exposed to view, that many of them are now as severely punished on earth for their sins as ever the Israelite was. David's difficulty as to the prosperity of the wicked, could find no solution until he went into the temple of God, and considered their *end*. Under the Jewish dispensation, the righteous were constantly in affliction, and under the Christian, "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. iv. 8).

Once more, therefore, we warn all honest students of Holy Scripture to "take heed *how* they read;" to beware of interpretations which, however popular, can neither be sustained by the scholar nor justified by the devout; to dread especially those *forms of unbelief* which disguise themselves under the robe of earnestness, but which are really nothing better than expressions of that want of faith in Scripture *as it is*, which has always been the curse of the Church, and the ruin of the world. D.

CHURCH PRINCIPLES.

THE QUESTION AGAIN STATED.

WE set out with the admission,—for it is a most just and righteous one,—that what are called "Church principles," objectionable as we may think them, are held by a very large and increasing body of Christian men, many of whom are distinguished above others by their learning, their piety, and their personal devotedness; men who hold their views as *conscientiously* as we believe we hold ours; men who would suffer or die in their defence as cheerfully as any body of confessors or martyrs that the Church has yet seen.

We are not insensible to *the charm* which imagination throws around the opinions we oppose. Next to the blessedness of living under the immediate control and guidance of the inspired Apostles themselves, we should consider that of submitting to the authority and instructions of *qualified successors;* for with *special qualifications*, both to teach and to rule, *they* certainly must be invested (no matter through how many hands the mysterious donation may have passed), who claim to act as the representatives of men who from the Lord himself received special gifts, when He "breathed on them," and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

There is, as Archer Butler impressively reminds us, "something unutterably awful in the thought of a mission inherited directly from the incarnate God: when, instead of the vague inference that finds the proof of a commission

in the utility of the office, or the necessity of the time, the minister, however humble, can actually trace along the page of history the unbroken succession that ends in the mighty Twelve, and their mightier Master; when the voice that bade him tend the flock of Christ is felt to be the echo,—after many a reflection indeed, yet still the very echo, of the voice which spake on the evening of the Resurrection,—'Receive ye the Holy Ghost;' and *that* again *itself an echo* from the central recesses of the Father's own eternity; when thus, by no ideal connection, however true to the meditative reason, but by plain and tangible links, we see ourselves bound to the living and suffering Christ."

There *would* be indeed, to every Christian mind, a *power* in such a thought which would *enforce* submission could it only be scripturally sustained. That in proportion to the extent and absolute character of the obedience demanded, is the importance of ascertaining the *reality* of the claim, will not be denied by any who feel that Christians live in a world where Satan is permitted to deceive to a frightful extent; and in a day when it is above all things important that we should not be "ignorant" of the "devices" of an enemy who is never so much to be shunned as when he comes upon us in the guise of "an angel of light."

Unquestionable indeed is it that "He who inspired prophets and holy men of old, when He was causing the Old Testament seers to preach, and their teaching to be recorded through many centuries, *might*, had He thought fit, have inspired the fathers of the first four hundred years, or popes and councils, and a never failing Church, to *develop* the New Testament, as the apostles did the Old; but *the proof of His having done so, as a matter of fact, is*," says the Bishop of London, in his recent treatise on "The

Dangers and Safeguards of Modern Theology," "*quite wanting*, and no fancied analogy (like that of Mr. Newman's in his Essay on Developments), can be adduced as evidence, to outweigh well-attested historical facts." "Where miracles are wanting, there we have no proof of inspiration, and without inspiration, it is impious to add to God's word," or, as we venture to think, to claim any exclusive right to teach or administer ordinances?

That "all the parts of the so-called Catholic system hang together we readily admit; yet we cannot go so far as to say that if the system be a delusion, "then even surplices are sinful;" while, on the other hand, "if it be a life-giving ordinance of Divine appointment, one vast sacrament (so to say), then even surplices are in their way essential." But we fully allow that the system must be regarded *as a whole*, and that, as such, it is either Divine or fraudulent. It must be the one or the other; it cannot be something between both. All parties admit that the Christian religion knows of no forms without substance; no externals without meaning. "Gorgeous chalices presume the intrinsic preciousness of the consecrated element which they inclose; white robes imply a holy priesthood; altars a propitiatory sacrifice; crosses betoken the severity of the Christ-life, and the all-sufficiency of the one atonement; lights symbolize the illustrious presence of Christ in the world, and so in other instances."

The grand question between Protestants and Catholics, and it should never be kept in the background, is this:— "Has Almighty God, or has He not, interposed a sacramental medium between Himself and man? Catholics,—Roman, Greek, and Anglican, with all their mutual differences, say that He has; true Protestants, with all theirs, say the

reverse. The respective modes in which this elementary question is determined will affect persons' views on a multitude of subjects arising out of it, such as the apostolical succession, the Divine virtue of the sacraments, the power of the keys, the visibility and indefectibility of the Church Catholic, and the like. Whether the Church is, in this sense, the authorized depository of the faith, and channel of grace through the sacraments and priesthood, or whether she is a mere *teacher*, whose only credentials are the *truth* of her doctrine, as determined by the judgment of individuals, exercised upon the words of Holy Scripture, is the grand question this generation has to determine."

We are ourselves, after long and deep reflection, solemnly convinced that what are called "Church Principles" have no solid foundation in the teachings of the Word of God; but as we cannot expect others who, from education, training, endearing associations, and an inordinate reverence for the past, are honestly and heartily attached to them, to perceive this as clearly as we do, it may not be amiss to bring before such persons some of the considerations which have weighed with ourselves, and which may, under the blessing of God, weigh with them, should a time ever come, when they are inclined to review their beliefs, and to examine with increased care the foundations on which they rest.

In our next we propose to state, as fairly as possible, THE ARGUMENT in favour of Church Principles. E.

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at,—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints, as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine.*

BRITISH MUSEUM

DISPENSATIONS.

WE are about to use the word "Dispensation" in its ordinary and popular sense, as expressive of the particular spiritual Economy under which the children of men are at any given time placed in relation to Divine things. We recognize *five* of these economies as more or less treated of in the Bible, viz.—the Antediluvian, the Patriarchal, the Jewish,

[Registered for transmission abroad.]

the Dispensation of grace to the Gentiles (Eph. iii. 2), and that which is called emphatically "the Dispensation of the fulness of times" (Eph. i. 10).

The task we now propose to ourselves is, to inquire whether or no anything is revealed in Scripture which is calculated to throw light on the object, character, and duration of the Economy under which we are, at the present time, living?

The first thing that strikes us in relation to it is, that while certain events which have taken place under it are *the subject of Old Testament prophecy*, the true character of the age or period, as a whole, was evidently either concealed from, or misunderstood by, the prophets.

Most distinctly are we informed that "the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus" (Acts i. 16); that the prophets "inquired and searched diligently what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow;" and that, "not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister" the things that are now made plain by the Gospel (1 Pet. i. 10—13); but nowhere is there any indication that their message extended beyond the publication of the statement that Messiah should suffer, and that glory should follow.

Nothing startles a careful observer more than the discovery of the fact that, in the eyes of all the Old Testament Seers, the humiliation and the glorification

of Messiah on the earth *seem to touch each other.* His advent is always regarded as the immediate harbinger of the world's subjection; His coming, as the direct precursor of the period when all men shall recognize a Divine ruler, before whom sin and sorrow take flight, and under whose tranquil sway the lion lies down with the lamb, and the knowledge of the Lord covers the earth "as the waters cover the sea." Not a hint is given of *delay;* not a suspicion seems to have entered their minds that eighteen hundred years and more, of struggle and persecution, should intervene, at the end of which five-sixths of the human race should be found even historically unacquainted with the fact of Christ's existence.

Who can wonder that, under these circumstances, the apostles, reverencing the prophets as they did, should expect the glory of Messiah to follow immediately on His humiliation, and ask, even at the last moment, "Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Who can wonder that, after the ascension of their Lord, both they and their followers should, *for some years,* have lived in daily expectation of His second and glorious coming in the clouds of heaven?

That they did so, is clear enough, since, to counteract the error, both Paul and Peter, under Divine guidance, are led to write,—the one to beseech his Thessalonian converts not to be "shaken in mind" by any supposition "that the day of Christ is at hand" (2 Thess. ii. 2); the other to urge that "one day is

with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Pet. iii. 8).

And yet all parties would have avoided the original error, if they had been mindful of the Lord's teaching when He sat upon the Mount of Olives, and answered their question, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matt. xxiv. 4—44.) They ought to have remembered that while He was yet with them He said, "The end is not yet;" the "gospel of the kingdom" must first be "preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations" (ver. 6 and 14), and "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke xxi. 24). But they *understood* not these things, for they were as yet hidden from their eyes. It was not, probably, till Paul received, by special revelation, a knowledge of "the mystery which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men," that *just views* began to prevail relative to the true character of the dispensation under which they were placed.

The statement that such a revelation had been given appears first in the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians (iii. 1—11); and as this passage has generally been interpreted as teaching, *either* simply that the Gentiles should be "fellow heirs" with the Jews, *or* else the kindred truth that, in becoming "heirs," Gentiles were *not to pass through* Judaism, it may be necessary to observe that the bringing in of the Gentiles was no mystery at all, inasmuch as it had been from the beginning revealed to Abraham (Gal. iii. 8), and was

fully recognized, in the plainest terms, by Isaiah and other prophets (Isa. ii. 2; xi. 10; Mal. i. 11); while the further truth that these privileges were to be enjoyed without reference to Judaism, had been taught to Peter in a vision soon after Pentecost (Acts xi. 1—18; xv. 7—11).

In the Epistle to the Romans (xvi. 25, 26), the Apostle again refers to "the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." It is this preaching of Jesus Christ "according to the revelation of the mystery," which, by the power of God, is to establish them in the faith (ver. 25).

Now what *can* this be but the preaching of the special love of Christ to the Gentiles, manifested in His gathering out of *them* a people who shall share His crown, and be numbered among His chosen? That it cannot mean the entire subjugation of them under this dispensation, seems clear from another passage in the same epistle (xiv. 11), where, quoting Isaiah (xlv. 23), the Apostle connects the fulfilment of the prophecy that "unto God every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear," and "all the ends of the earth" look unto Christ to be saved, with that day when "every one of us shall give account of himself to God." "We shall all stand," he says, before the judgment seat of Christ; for it is written, "As I live,

saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me" (Rom. xiv. 10, 11).

We scarcely see how, on any other hypothesis, the conduct of St. Paul—so different from our own—can be explained. Prince of missionaries as he was, he never seems to look forward to the conversion of the masses of mankind. His prayers, and tears, and efforts, are always for the few, rather than for the many. His supplications are not, as we might have expected they would have been, for the subjugation of the Empire to Christ, but always for "the saints;" and especially for those who had been called under his own ministry, that they might "grow in grace," and that he might "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

"It seems, indeed, impossible to deny the essentially limited nature of a dispensation that consists of a *Church*,—a body of *called-out* ones,—an election out of the mass. If it be an election, it cannot be universal; if it be universal, then there is no more Church or election."*

Further, that "the mystery" spoken of as one "which from the beginning of the world had been hid in God," must have involved *much more* than ordinary interpretations suppose, is evident from the subsequent teaching of the apostles, which frequently relates, *on the one hand*, to the election of a chosen people out of all nations, who, like the Master, should be

* "Mystery of the Gentile Dispensation," by Ridley H. Herschell.

hated and rejected of men, yet honoured to be under Him kings and priests for ever; and *on the other*, to a "mystery of iniquity," *then* at work, *soon* to bring forth "ravenous wolves," who should "traffic in the Word," make "booty" of the flock, account "godliness a means of gain," and finally culminate in a "man of sin," and "son of perdition," whom the Lord should "consume with the Spirit of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His coming." All this clearly indicates that the light received by this special revelation fell on the entire Economy, and was intended to guide the expectations of believers into a right channel.

This view is confirmed by the Second Epistle to Timothy (chap. iii.), in which Paul enlarges on the character of the "last days;" and still more, perhaps, by the way in which St. Peter, in the third chapter of his second epistle, treats the entire subject. Without at all withdrawing the assertion in his first letter, that "the end of all things" was at hand (iv. 7),—for this is ever true—he now warns them that great delay will take place before Christ's return; a delay so great, that scoffers will arise, ridiculing the very thought of His second advent, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (ver. 4). The *fact* of the Deluge, regarded as a Divine judgment, will, he tells us, first be denied (ver. 5, 6), and then the prophecy of the future destruction of the world by fire will be rejected as a similar exaggeration. He

assures us, however, that the Word of God will stand; that "the Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness," but that mercy is involved in the delay; that the "long-suffering" of God arises only from His unwillingness "that any should perish;" that it means "salvation," *even as Paul had taught them*, "according to the wisdom given unto him," revealing in his epistles some things "hard to be understood," which the unlearned (or rather unteachable) and unstable wrest, as they do the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction (iii. 15, 16).

What the "things hard to be understood" may precisely be, we know not; but it is worth notice that the apostle Paul often uses the phrase "*my Gospel*," as if his message to mankind included matters directly and specially revealed to himself. In the Epistle to the Galatian Church (ii. 2) he says that, seventeen years after his conversion, he went up to Jerusalem "by revelation," in order that he might communicate to the Church in that city, and to the other apostles, the Gospel which he preached among the Gentiles.

Judging by what is said in that Epistle alone, we should naturally come to the conclusion that its sole peculiarity was that it asserted the liberty of Gentile converts to abstain from the observances of the Mosaic law. But it is by no means probable that this was all; for, as we have before seen, Gentile freedom had not only been directly taught to Peter soon after Pentecost, but, *in consequence of his testimony*, had been formally and officially recognized as the revealed will

of God by the apostles and brethren in Judea (Acts x. and xi.)

What more, then, did Paul's revelation or Gospel include? What could it embrace that was in any way peculiar to him, and not taught by the other apostles?

For an answer we must look to the First Epistle to the Corinthians (chap. xv.), in which we find the doctrine of *the resurrection of the body* first clearly set forth as a necessary consequence of Christ's having raised His own body. This particular doctrine he declares to be "*the* Gospel" which he had "preached" unto them,—*that* wherein they "stood," and by which they were "saved" from the power of this present evil world (ver. 1, 2).

But again we ask, "What is there in the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, as taught by this apostle, which makes it so peculiarly his own?"

We are at a loss to see what it can be, *unless*, indeed, the resurrection be connected—as we believe it always is by St. Paul—with the fulfilment of all those glorious promises of *a new moral world* which abound in the writings of the Old Testament,—unless it be the prelude to "the dispensation of the fulness of times."

Such we believe it to be; and we cannot but think that if Scripture be carefully searched, and its various announcements relative to the resurrection be thoughtfully examined, it will become evident that *then*, and not till then, will "the knowledge of the Lord cover the earth as the waters cover the sea."

Dr. Arnold, when lecturing in Oxford, after taking a

survey of the field of modern history, once asked whether there were, in the existing resources of the nations of mankind, any materials for a new epoch distinct from those which have gone before? and he answered—None.

Dr. Stanley, meditating on this conclusion, which he does not dispute, observes :—"We cannot hesitate to say, that if the Christian Church be drawing to its end, or if it continue to its end with no other objects than those which it has hitherto sought, it will end with its acknowledged resources confessedly undeveloped, its finest hopes of usefulness almost untried and unattempted. It will have been like an ungenial spring, cut short in full view of the summer,—a stately vessel wrecked within the very sight of shore." *

St. Paul seems to us to remove this difficulty, and to reconcile the apparent discrepancy which exists between things as they are, and what we are assured they shall be, when he expounds inspired prophecy (as no other man does), teaching that it is not till "death is swallowed up in victory," that "the veil that is spread over all nations" shall be removed (comp. 1 Cor. xv. 54, with Isa. xxv. 6—8). If so, *then* it is that Israel, though she has destroyed herself, shall be ransomed from the power of the grave (Hosea xiii. 9—14); and as *this dispensation* is the one in which God visits the Gentiles "to take out of them a people for His name" (Acts xv. 14), so it is not till the Dispensation has

* "Advantages of Ecclesiastical History." Introduction to Eastern Church, page 79.

finished its work, and the elect are gathered in, that the Saviour will "return," and "build again the tabernacle of David;" for not till then will "the residue" (the rest) of mankind seek after the Lord (Acts xv. 16, 17). May not St. Paul point to this when he says, "flesh and blood,"—men in their present condition,—"cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. xv. 50)?

If this be the true view, the "stately vessel" is not "wrecked;" it but disappears for a season in the narrow straits of death, soon to emerge in new splendour on the ocean of unclouded felicity.

The Apocalypse of St. John, as we think, completes the lesson by the presentation of what may almost be termed a prophetic history of the fortunes of the Church during the period that is to intervene between the first and second advents of the Redeemer. But we must reserve the *evidence* of this for a distinct paper. A.

THE EDUCATIONAL DISPENSATION.

"The glorious work of the Triune God, in *calling out and educating* the partners of Christ's throne and kingdom, I conceive to be the mystery that was revealed to Paul; a work which now makes known the *manifold wisdom* of God unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places; and which 'in the ages to come' will manifest to them *the riches of His grace.*

"That which was *new* in the Gentile Dispensation was its interpolation, if I may so call it, between the Jewish Dispensation and that universal dispensation announced by all the prophets, as following the advent of the Redeemer." This is the *preparation* for the time when "from the throne of God and of the Lamb a healing power shall go forth to all the nations; and in the administration of this 'health and cure,' the glorified saints, the Church, the Bride of Christ, shall share with her King and Lord."—*Herschell.*

SCRIPTURE.

Chapter X.—*On Typical and Allegorical Interpretations.*

FEW thoughtful readers of Scripture will dispute that *events* in the earlier dispensation sometimes foreshadow other events in the later. As readily will it be allowed, that illustrations are not unfrequently drawn from the Old Testament by the writers of the New, in which *persons* there spoken of are regarded as prefiguring other and later personages.

Our Lord himself in this way illustrates His burial and resurrection by the history of Jonah (Matt. xii. 40), and His lifting up on the cross by that of the brazen serpent (John iii. 14). Again, He is said to be "a high priest after the order of Melchisedek" (Heb. vii.); while the preservation of Noah and his family in the ark seems, by the apostle Peter, to be regarded as symbolical of the preservation of the elect (1 Pet. iii. 20).

Nothing, however, is built on these resemblances. They *illustrate* later truth, but cannot, on that account, strictly speaking, be termed types; since there is nothing to show that either the events or persons referred to were *designed* to be such, and therefore should be regarded as "*actual prophecies*" of things to come.

In answering the question, What rule should be adopted in deciding whether a passage or a person is or is not typical? we believe that none safer or better can be laid

down than that which is advocated by Bp. Marsh. It is this: "There is no other rule by which we can distinguish a real from a pretended type than that of Scripture itself. There are no other possible means by which we can know that a previous design and a pre-ordained connection existed. Whatever persons or things, therefore, recorded in the Old Testament were expressly declared by Christ and His apostles to have been designed as pre-figurations of persons or things relating to the New Testament, such persons or things, so recorded in the former, are types of the persons or things with which they are compared in the latter."

"But if we assert that a person or thing was *designed to prefigure* another person or thing, *where no such prefiguration has been declared by Divine authority*, we make an assertion for which we neither have nor can have the slightest foundation." In short, to borrow the words of Professor Moses Stuart, "just so much of the Old Testament is to be accounted typical as the New Testament affirms to be so, *and no more*." This takes the whole question out of the hands of fanciful expositors, and enables the most unlettered reader to decide what is typical and what is not.

Dr. Davidson, in his "Introduction," a little modifies this view, but the result is not, after all, very different. He says, "Various places in the New Testament intimate or expressly assert that most of the institutions peculiar to the old, *prefigured* spiritual things under the new economy. The Epistle to the Hebrews plainly shows that the entire Levitical law, with its sacrifices, rites, and priests, foreshadowed better things (Comp. x. 1; vii. 11—22; viii. 1—13; ix. 1; x. 18). The same view is given by Paul in the Epistle to the Colossians (ii. 17). The Epistle to the

Galatians has it also (iii. 4). But inasmuch as the various parts of these institutions are nowhere placed side by side with spiritual correlatives, it is obviously unsafe for us to do more than to receive *generally* that which it has not pleased God to explain in detail. So far as these types have a *prophetic* character they are clear enough for practical purposes; but, like other prophecies, they are not to be interpreted *minutely*, according to the fancy of the expositor."

If these principles had always been adhered to, from what a load of overshadowing error would Scripture have been delivered. For what is a man to make of his Bible who is told by one, that Moses, in "forty particulars," typifies Christ; by another, that "every passage in the Old Testament looks backward, and forward, and every way, like light from the sun, not only to the state before and under the Law, but under the Gospel too;" by a third, that there are forty-nine typical resemblances between Joseph and Christ, and seventeen between Jacob and Christ,—his worst actions being regarded equally symbolical with the best.*

Nor should it be forgotten (for it is a solemn warning), that on this use of the supposed types and figures of the Old Testament the Roman Catholic Church builds most of her tenets.

All this folly, for it cannot properly be designated by any other name, rests on the notion that truth, instead of being simply *revealed in* the Bible, is to be *developed out of it* by human ingenuity; that underneath its *direct* revelations lie intimations which may justly be made the basis of new discoveries; and that *depths of meanings* are to be found in

* Mather, Keach, Taylor, Gould, and others, quoted by Fairbairn.

the plainest statements, if only the investigator be spiritual enough to discern them.

Let this doctrine once be allowed, and nothing can be clearer than that, under its operation, the Word of God is turned into an enigma, and truth lies prostrate at the mercy of the fanciful, the ingenious, and the weak. "Under such methods," it has been well said, "we may shut our lexicons, and draw lots for the sense."

Intimately connected with this abuse of Scripture, and equally foolish and dangerous, is the attempt to attach *more than one meaning* to any passage of Holy Writ, whatever variety of applications it may admit of.

The Fathers are untrustworthy as expositors, mainly on account of the vicious habit into which they fell, of multiplying meanings in Scripture. Some held to a fourfold, some to a threefold, and others to a twofold sense in the sacred text. Origen is supposed to have maintained a *twofold sense*, and a *fourfold application*, of all Scripture. Others denied a *literal* sense altogether; and most of them imagined that such a sense was far too meagre to be worthy of God, and that the literal meaning was merely intended to be the vehicle of higher and more ethereal teaching. The Bible by this means was made, in their hands, "to reflect every hue of fancy, and every shade of belief, in those who assumed the office of interpretation;" and the result was, that instead of being rendered serviceable for practical instruction, it soon became "one vast sea of uncertainty and confusion."

This school is not yet extinct. Many still regard this fanciful mode of dealing with Scripture as eminently spiritual; some, by its help, developing out of the prophecies the most extraordinary conclusions concerning passing

events; and others, of a different school, explaining away, by a like process, the plainest declarations of the Word of God relative to the second advent of Christ, and the character of the dispensation under which we live.

Such persons may perhaps be reminded with advantage that, in the course they are pursuing, they are but following in the footsteps of those Jewish rabbis who, in our Lord's time, by similar perversions made the Word of God of none effect. These men used to say, that there was not even one letter in the Law from which great mountains of meaning did not hang; and one of them actually professed to teach thirteen different methods of expounding the plainest declarations.

We conclude by laying down the following rule:—He who would understand his Bible, must be content to regard as typical or allegorical *such portions of Scripture only* as are declared to be such on inspired authority; he must be satisfied with the one plain and paramount meaning which manifests itself to the simple-minded in connection with the context; and disregarding all human fancies, however spiritual the teacher of such imaginations may be supposed to be, he must determine, at all hazards, to take the book just as it stands; to accept it in the spirit of a little child; to confess that he has before him but fragments of a truth that is, *in its entireness*, infinite; and be content to wait for the day when that which now sometimes seems to us to be "torn into a thousand pieces, and scattered to the four winds of heaven," shall be gathered limb to limb, and "moulded with every joint and member into an immortal feature of loveliness and perfection." D.

CHURCH PRINCIPLES.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE argument in favour of "Church principles," as presented for our acceptance by their ablest advocates, seems very much to amount to this,—

That, because Christ committed *the planting* of His Church to Apostles, *differing altogether from other men*, not only by the possession of an inspiration which enabled them to teach absolute truth, but also by the possession of miraculous powers for *enforcing* obedience wherever the exercise of such power might seem needful or desirable (and which, be it observed, none but they possessed), *therefore*, we may conclude, in accordance with what is regarded as a fair interpretation of promises made to the Apostles, that He still governs the Church by a similar delegation of authority, viz., by successors who can actually trace along the page of history the unbroken line that ends in the mighty Twelve and their mightier Master.

In what other sense, it is triumphantly asked, save that of an authorized succession, can we interpret those striking words of our Lord, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world"? (Matt. xxviii. 20.)

We reply by another question,—If the words referred to were intended to indicate a continuance to successors, through all time, of the special favour and guidance granted to the Apostles, how comes it pass that *none* of those who

profess to *be* such, differ in any respect from other men? that none of them possess any *special* qualification for enlightening others, or are endowed with power to inflict punishment? That in teaching, no one now pretends to go beyond the one inspired Book, which is in the hands of every man? And that in discipline no spiritual ruler in the world, unless it be the Pope, even affects to be other than *personally* powerless?

No man now is accustomed to write, "What will ye? Shall I come unto you *with a rod*, or in love and in the spirit of meekness?" (1 Cor. vi. 21); nor does any one venture to say, "I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, *to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh*, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. v. 3—5).

We say nothing about the theological differences which notoriously exist among our own bishops and clergy; nor will we urge the well-known fact that many of them owe spiritual rank and elevation rather to their political connections than to their learning or their sanctity, for these things may be regarded as accidents. But we do say that it is but reasonable to suppose that if Christ *had* intended to make the apostolate permanent, He would also have continued *with the office* special endowments for its right exercise. To us it seems an absolute *non sequitur* to affirm that because Christ originally planted His Church through the agency of men *differing from others* by special endowments, *therefore* He continues to guide and govern it by authorized

successors *not distinguishable from others* by the possession of a single qualification differing from those which are common to all instructed and pious men, whether lay or ecclesiastic.

The point at issue, be it observed, has nothing whatever to do with any dispute as to whether Episcopacy was, or was not, a primitive form of Church government. We believe that it was. It is simply this, whether any Church in the present day, whatever may be its form of government, has a just right to claim for its bishops or elders, presbyters or other ministers, such a descent from the Apostles as carries with it a right to the obedience of the faithful?

Quite apart, too, from the precise subject under discussion is the question whether the advocates of "Church principles" are justified in interpreting (as Dr. Archer Butler does) "the breathing" of our Lord on the Apostles as indicative of the impartation to them of a "new life," or, as "really and truly giving to them the power in a general sense of absolving from guilt by remitting or retaining sins."

Both these conclusions, however, we feel bound to reject, with all the consequences supposed to follow therefrom. For, as to remitting sin in general, it is perfectly clear that the Apostles never exercised such a power, or even professed to be endowed with it. They simply remitted or retained those *special inflictions* on account of sin which were common under the Old Testament economy, and which continued during the planting of the Christian Church, but which have never been recognized since that time. And as to *spiritual life or light*, there is nothing whatever to show that the Apostles, or any of them, had more of either the one or the other *after* the act in question

than they had before. They continued till Pentecost in Jewish darkness, and even on the day of the resurrection were doubting whether Christ was indeed He that was to redeem Israel.

That the Apostles had the power of miraculously inflicting or remitting punishment on account of sin, and that this was the power imparted by the "breathing," is clear enough from the sacred narrative, for they are repeatedly represented as exercising it. It is equally clear that this power was, to the last, exclusively retained in their own hands. They did not transmit it even to their *immediate* successors, such as Timothy or Titus.

As certain is it that they possessed the power of imparting to others ability to work miracles of healing, to speak with tongues, and to fulfil all the ordinary duties of the eldership. The sacred narrative is again our authority for asserting this, since we there find that they continually communicated such gifts to the early converts. But the power of thus imparting blessing they did not *transmit* to any one. Philip in Samaria worked many and great miracles, but he could not communicate a single endowment to any one of his converts. It was not till Peter and John came down and prayed that these new believers might receive the Holy Ghost, that, in accordance with the Lord's promise (Matt. xviii. 19, 20), their petition was granted, and the Holy Ghost, in His miraculous gifts, was communicated to the Samaritans.

To us, this circumstance indicates clearly the limitation as to time during which miracles were to be wrought in the Church, and, therefore, the limitation as to time during which *special and miraculous qualifications* should be imparted to any class or order of men, for the furtherance of

the Gospel. These powers evidently lingered in the Church till the last man died on whom the last of the Apostles had laid hands, thus stretching by possibility to the middle of the second century; but after this they ceased, and no such thing as a trustworthy miracle of later date can be found in the records of ecclesiastical history.

Further, if any one fact more than another stands out prominently in the New Testament, it is that CHRIST HIMSELF now governs the Church, although *invisibly*.

All now admit that, "whatever in the changes of the world, or of the Church, or of the nature of Christ's relationship to both, may be intended and suitable for the future, it appears very manifest that, *for the present*, the universality of the kingdom of Christ is most fittingly realized and secured by the influences of an unseen Ruler, and a purely spiritual energy operating as His gift and representative."

As that Spiritual Ruler we recognize the Holy Spirit; and hence it is that Christ has now in the world no "deputies or images of authority;" no earthly centre, as is pretended by the Papacy; no authorized class of teachers, rulers, or governors: all blessing proceeds directly and immediately from Himself.

We repeat, that if Christ *had* now representatives of any kind upon the earth, common sense teaches us that such men *must*, in the very nature of things, be distinguished, in one way or other, by unmistakeable marks of superiority,—such as the possession of wisdom, or power like that of the Apostles, or at least of something, whatever it might be, which should clearly point them out as *intended* by God to teach and to rule.

Had ecclesiastics any such stamp of heaven upon them, the claim to be independent of, if not above civil governors,

would in a Christian country be perfectly reasonable; for to be ruled by men having a larger share than others of wisdom and goodness, would be of all things most desirable.

The fact that in the middle ages the clergy *were*, as a body, in many important respects *superior* to those by whom they were surrounded, alone explains their power, and to some extent excuses their pretensions. E.

INTERPRETATIONS.

No. 15.

Acts iii. 19—21, "*Repent ye therefore, and be converted*" (*i. e.*, turn *from* the evil, and *towards* the good), "*that your sins may be blotted out,* WHEN *the times of refreshing*" (the great season of joy and gladness, when Messiah is glorified, —*Alford*) "*shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached* (before appointed,—*Alford*) *unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution*" (*Alford* considers that to translate "*fulfilment*" is against all precedent) "*of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.*"

It will be obvious, at a glance, that much of the meaning of this passage turns upon the word translated WHEN; the sense being, if the English version is correct, that if Peter's hearers repented, their sins, and especially their last crowning iniquity as the crucifiers of Christ, should be blotted out *when* Christ should come the second time, "without a sin-offering unto salvation." And there is something beautiful in the thought thus presented, that when Messiah returned in glory, He would not reproach them with His murder, but forgive and forget it altogether.

The translation, however, is strongly objected to. Dr. Alford says οπως αν cannot mean *when*, because it never occurs in that sense in the New Testament. He says it can have but one meaning, viz., "in order that" (the times of refreshing may come).

The teaching of the passage then is, according to the learned Dean, that the conversion of the Jews is to *bring about* the great times of refreshment, and so to herald the second coming of the Lord; that, in fact, "the coming" is delayed by their non-conversion.

Into this question, so far as it is a purely philological one, we are not disposed to enter, beyond observing that both Stuart and Bloomfield differ from Dr. Alford.

Bloomfield admits that examples of οπως, *in sensu* χρονικῶ, are not rare, although not with αν. He might have added, that although οπως is not literally translated "*when*" anywhere else, it is, in this very book (Acts xx. 16), rendered "because," *in the sense of* "*when*," and could not there bear any other interpretation.

Stuart, after admitting that οπως, when it occurs in the New Testament, generally means "that," or "in order that," maintains that it also means "when," and "after that;" and adds, "So it means plainly in Acts iii. 19." He also insists that οπως has this and no other meaning in Hebrews ii. 9, since Christ is crowned with glory and honour, not "in order that" He might taste of death, but "when," or "after that" He had, by the grace of God, thus suffered.

When, however, Dr. Bloomfield adds, apparently as a reason for rejecting the "*when*" of the authorized version, that, "turn it which way we will, it yields no *satisfactory* sense," we demur on two grounds, viz., *first*, that this, if true, would be no argument at all in favour of change,

since no philological criticism is worth anything, which is either biassed or controlled by theological conceptions; and, *secondly*, that the passage, as it stands in the English version, yields a *better* sense, and one far more in accordance with the general teaching of Scripture, than it ever can do when changed into "*in order that.*"

For assuredly there is no reason whatever to suppose, with Dr. Alford, that Scripture anywhere teaches that the second coming of the Lord *waits* for the conversion of the Jew. On the contrary, the words of Christ himself (Matt. xxii. 19, 20) clearly intimate that the bridal festival of the Lamb will take place whenever the *Gentile calling* is complete; when, in this sense, God has accomplished the number of His elect.

Further, we can find no evidence in Scripture that the Jews, *as a nation*, will ever be converted under this dispensation. That great numbers of them may be brought to Christ in the latter day is highly probable; and it is *possible* that such a conversion may embrace the greater part, or even the whole, *of that fragment of the chosen people* which may at that time be living on the earth. But this is not the conversion of the Jews as a people; nor can we imagine that such a change, if it took place, would in any sense justify St. Paul's assertion that "all Israel shall be saved."

L.

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at,—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints, as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine.*

BRITISH MUSEUM

THE APOCALYPSE.

IF the view taken in our last number of the dispensation under which we live be the *true* one; if this dispensation be only of grace to the Gentiles (Eph. iii. 2), and *not final;* if it be a dispensation, the peculiar and lengthened character of which was completely concealed from the Old Testament prophets; if it be

[Registered for transmission abroad.]

the subject of that special revelation which St. Paul tells us he enjoyed,—"the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began" (Rom. xvi. 25, 26); if the only indications of the future of Christianity in the world, *prior* to this apostolic revelation, were to be found in our Lord's discourse on the Mount of Olives (Matt. xxiv. 4—44); and if our era is to be followed by another, called "the dispensation of the fulness of times" (Eph. i. 10), *then*, as it seems to us, light is thrown on *the purposes* of the Apocalypse, which, if rightly used, may serve to give us at least some clue to its *interpretation*.

For then it but takes up, and *expands* in prophetic outline, the hints which lie scattered in the writings of the apostle Paul, and *illustrates* more at large the prophetic discourse of the Saviour on the Mount of Olives; its *purpose* being, not, as some would tell us, to *conceal* the future until time, the great interpreter, should expound its meaning; but to *make known* to the children of men future events, just so far and no further than such a revelation may be necessary to *prepare* Christians for their approach, and to *preserve* them from the errors and dangers into which they are likely to fall, if they take up the notion that no further changes await the Church, but that it is to go on "conquering and to conquer," until all nations are subdued to the Redeemer.

The Apocalypse, viewed, as we think it should be, simply as *filling up* what had been hinted at by St. Paul, and expounding what had been more

directly taught by Christ, becomes to the Christian what Old Testament prophecy was to the Jew,—a "light," though "shining in a dark place" (2 Pet. i. 19), and a fresh *illustration* of the inspired declaration,—"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets" (Amos iii. 7). Regarded thus, its prophecy becomes as much the interpreter of ecclesiastical history, as ecclesiastical history is the interpreter of prophecy; yet in each case *testing the moral condition* of those to whom it is presented, and becoming silent or eloquent, according as that condition may be. To the flippant, the sceptical, and the prejudiced, prophecy is *dumb;* to the froward it shows itself froward; to the lowly and meek alone is it *comfort and strength.*

If this view be a true one, what we have to look for in the Book of Revelation is, *first,* additional prophetic intimations regarding the Church, of a character harmonizing with, and corresponding in order and significance to, the declarations of the Lord; and, *secondly,* such references to the history and character of the "mystery of iniquity" as were likely to be useful in warning men of its approaches, and in delivering them from its seductions.

And this is precisely what we *do* find enshrined in the magnificent imagery of St. John.

We are not about to enter either on the dangers or intricacies incident to minute interpretation; yet we cannot refrain from drawing attention to at least the *general outline* of that splendid prophecy in its relation

to the latter days, in order to show—whether dimly or clearly we say not,—that it shadows forth a course of events *to the character and order* of which it is well that we should "take heed" (2 Pet. i. 19).

Under the figure of the unfolding of seven successive sheets of a pictorial roll, each presenting hieroglyphic symbols, we note, first, a representation of the early and peaceful conquests of the Gospel, under the emblem of a kingly rider on a white horse (chap. vi. 1, 2); next the bloody persecutions to which its followers were to be exposed, represented by a shedder of blood on a red horse (ver. 3, 4); then gloom and decay, under the emblems of famine (ver. 5, 6); then mortal sickness and dissolution, under the figure of Death on the pale or ghastly horse (ver 7, 8).

Such are the *four first* seals, which are distinguished from those that follow by *two* peculiarities;—*first*, by the introduction of a *war horse*, which is, in Scripture, everywhere the symbol of military power (Exod. xv. 21; Jer. li. 21; Ezek. xxiii. 6; Hag. ii. 22; Zech. ix. 10), and here, probably, of the Roman empire,—the field on which the work goes on. *Secondly, a rider*, which we presume must, in each case, be regarded as *a personification* of the prevailing or ruling influence of the period represented. For we regard "the seals" in each case as representing *eras*. It is arbitrary beyond measure to make, as some do, the first seal to symbolize *an era*,—that of the Church's peaceful prosperity,—and the sixth seal *an event*,—whether that event be, in the estimation of such expositors, the

overthrow of paganism in the Roman empire, or the day of judgment.

The *fifth* seal (ver. 9—11) seems to indicate a period of martyrdom,—not at the hands of the pagan power of Rome, for the war horse now disappears, but for "the Word of God and for the testimony." Apparently, therefore, it is persecution for upholding the teachings of the Bible, and for witnessing to its supreme authority.

The *sixth* shadows forth a time of overthrow and universal change, under the figure of a raging whirlwind; ending, *not* with the coming, but with "*the sign* of the Son of man in heaven" (ver. 12—17).

The *seventh seal*, preceded (under the sixth) by the sealing of the elect (vii. 1—17), is obviously the era of judgments and of miracle (viii.—xi.), ending with the declaration that "the kingdoms of this world *are become* the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ" (xi. 15—19).

So far—as we should have anticipated—we have a course of prediction *illustrating* that of the Lord, as recorded in the twenty-fourth chapter of St. Matthew.*

But now a *new series* of visions commences, and in them we trace clearly, as we think, the rise, progress,

* A period of slaughter, when Christians shall be hated and killed for His name's sake (ver. 8—10); then, a period of corruption and decay, —false teaching, iniquity, and loss of spiritual affection (ver. 11, 12); then a time of martyrdom, implied in the promise to those who "endure unto the end" (ver. 13); then the period of the open door, when the Gospel is to be preached for a witness unto all nations; and *then* the end (ver. 14).

and fall, first of the "Mystery of Iniquity," and then of the "Man of Sin," spoken of by Paul and Peter.

The Church, under the image of a woman pregnant with the kingly rule of Christ, cherishes, as the early Christians did, the false expectation that the *reign* of the Redeemer would immediately begin; that Christ would immediately come; that Christians would now be kings on earth; and that universal empire would be the dower of the new faith. For the realization of this hope, the woman cries to God, as one "travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered" (xii. 2). Here we have the *first rudiment* of the apostacy.

Instead, however, of this expectation finding a fulfilment, *a persecuting power* appears, under the emblem of a seven-headed Dragon, while the hope of rule over all nations (the new-born, kingly child) is withdrawn to heaven until the fulness of time shall come (ver. 3—5). The true Church, in consequence of increasing corruption, now flees into the wilderness (becomes an invisible Church), and is there fed of God (ver. 6). In the meantime, a long struggle ends in the downfall of paganism (ver. 7—12); and then, "a flood" (of barbarians) having failed to sweep away the Church, in consequence of "the earth" (the worldly admixture of Christianity and paganism, which then had rule) helping "the woman" by receiving into her bosom the barbaric hosts (ver. 13—16), the enmity of Satan centres on the spiritual few "which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (ver. 17).

The "Mystery of Iniquity" is now briefly foreshadowed under the figure of a seven-headed mystic Beast (or power), *rising out of* the flood of waters (the incursions of the Barbarians), crowned, and bearing the name of blasphemy (xiii. 1); it receives royal power (ver. 2); it is wounded to death (by Mahometan incursions), yet wonderfully healed (ver. 3); it claims and secures universal homage (ver. 4); it talks boastfully and blasphemously (ver. 5, 6); it overcomes all opposition (ver. 7, 8); it falls by the hands of its own children (as *we* think it is *now* doing), (ver. 9, 10); and is succeeded by a new form of evil,—the Man of Sin,—*another power*, coming up like a lamb, but (soon) speaking like a dragon (ver. 11); attaining universal empire (ver. 12); supported by evil spirits, deceiving by false miracles, and reviving *the outward form* (the image) of the former beast (ver. 12—15); persecuting to the death (ver. 15—17); and embodied *in an individual* (ver. 18).

Divine judgments now approach. The "Harvest" (of saints) is gathered in by the heavenly reaper (xiv. 1—16); and the "Vintage" (of wrath) is trodden (ver. 17—20). The *seven last plagues* (vials of wrath), corresponding to the seven trumpets and following judgments (viii.—xi.), are poured out (xv., xvi.); the ruin of *both* the foregoing forms of Antichrist follows (xvi.—xviii.); and *then*, earth being cleared of its inhabitants (xix. 1—21), Satan is bound (xx. 1—3), the "First Resurrection" is accomplished (ver. 4—6), the martyrs are seen on thrones judging

persons who (wherever they may come from) *are evidently in a state of probation*, since, after a given period, Satan is loosed (ver. 7), and a rebellion takes place, which ends in the destruction of the rebels by fire from heaven (ver. 8, 9), and the casting of the devil, the beast, and the false prophet into the burning lake (ver. 10).

The final judgment now takes place. All the dead stand before God (ver. 11—13); Death and Hades are no more (ver. 14); the unwritten in the book of life are cast into the fire (ver. 15); the New Jerusalem descends from heaven, and the Elect dwell there with Christ for ever (xxi. 1—8).

A striking symbolic description of "the Bride, the Lamb's Wife" (ver. 9), is then given, under the figure of a glorious city (ver. 9—23), and "*saved nations*," not *in* the city,—into which nothing can enter that defileth,—but walking "in the light of it," and healed by the leaves of a tree growing within it, unite with the "kings of the earth" (whoever they may be) in "bringing glory and honour" into it (ver. 24—27; xxii. 1—5). With warnings and exhortations the book concludes (ver. 6—21).

We have purposely avoided any notice of the symbolic numbers, such as the "forty and two months" during which "the holy city" is to be "trodden under foot" (xi. 2); the "thousand two hundred and threescore days" of the prophecy of "the witnesses" (ver. 3); the "three days and a half" during which they shall be "dead" and scorned (ver. 9); the "thousand

two hundred and threescore days" during which the woman remains in the wilderness (xii. 6); the "times, time, and half a time" during which she is nourished there (ver. 14); the "forty and two months'" reign of the mystic beast (xiii. 5), or the "six hundred threescore and six" which are to indicate the name of the Man of Sin (ver. 18), since these would lead us on to disputed ground, and open up questions which it would be impossible *here* to handle satisfactorily.

But we are far from regarding these numbers as unintelligible or unimportant, since while they *conceal* rather than reveal *the precise dates* they are supposed to mark out, they teach us this great lesson, that all the events of this Dispensation *have their limits fixed by God;* that the time is short; that therefore nothing can justify us in saying—as many do—that, for aught we can tell, "the world is yet in its infancy, and may last ten thousand years," or to exclaim against what is often called "*dreaming* of the coming of Christ during the existence at least of this or the next century."

Good men would not speak thus, and "offend against the generation of God's children" (Psa. lxxiii. 15), if their faith had not been fearfully shaken in the inspiration of the Apocalypse, or at least in the possibility of gathering any practical instruction as to the future from its pages; an error, for which something like an apology may certainly be found in the folly and presumption which have too often characterized interpreters, and in the almost endless diversity of

opinions which have been given forth relative to the supposed date, object, structure, and proper analysis of the book.

We fearlessly ask any person of ordinary intelligence to take his Bible, and to follow strictly the general outline we have just sketched, and then to tell us *wherein* lies the great obscurity, the element of doubt, the mystery and mystification supposed to belong to this prophecy. We have *expounded* it (if so slight an attempt may be called an exposition) *straight on*, just as we should any other book, and, we think, without any effort to make it favour particular views. The *result* is, a conviction that it is intended to depict, at least in outline, the leading events and general character of *this* Dispensation; that it is intended to be *to us* what Old Testament prophecy was to the Jew—*clear* in outline, *obscure* as to dates and details; that our insight into its meaning will depend upon our freedom from pre-conceived notions, and on the amount of moral sympathy we may have with the Divine purposes; and that so far from its study being either unprofitable or unpractical, it is eminently adapted to lessen in our eyes the force of this world's attractions; to strengthen bright and blessed hopes of future *usefulness* as well as joy; and to enable us to discern, through all the dark mysteries of God's government, the sunshine that reigns behind, and the glory that shall never be eclipsed.

In relation to the immediate object of our inquiry, we can only say that we discover nothing in the reve-

lations of Scripture relative to this Dispensation which leads us to believe that it is *the final one;* we think we see more than one indication of a dispensation yet to come, during which those who have, *in this or preceding economies, lived and died in ignorance of Christ's redemption,* may eventually be made acquainted with the great salvation, and by Divine grace, be led thankfully to accept it. A.

DREAD OF DISCUSSION.

"We are told that there is no absolute truth—that we may have opinions, not convictions. Fatal doctrine! Truth is a thing essential in itself. The theory of indifferent things compromised the Reformation of the sixteenth century. It may compromise what we would venture to call the Reformation of the nineteenth. Why need we try to hide it from ourselves? There is a tendency drawing us to peace without truth, and we are ready to content ourselves with this union at little cost. Let us seek union only in absolute obedience. Let us bow before the standard of the Scriptures, and we shall reach unity without the sacrifice of a single truth. We say that we are rising above the level of debate. I say we are sinking into the quagmires of quietism. There are Christians who do not wish to know anything of debated questions. But God requires of us that we should hold captive no 'truth in unrighteousness.' Doubtless our generation, weary of controversies and of empty talk, runs the risk of forgetting the dignity of discussion. But remember, Christianity is the only religion which has raised questions for discussion. Along with individual faith discussion appears. Let us hold fast our privilege. Christianity is not a reign of terror. It does not call us to dread ideas and debates. We must learn to *doubt*. Now we know only *in part*. Scepticism, murmuring 'There is nothing true,' is one thing; the feeling of the want of *digging deep* is another. Let us remember these things, for we have still much to discuss, and we must have holy discussions."—*Count Agenor de Gasparin, at the meeting of the "Evangelical Alliance" in Geneva*, 1861.

SCRIPTURE.

CHAPTER XI.—*On the Influence of Hymns and other Sacred Poetry in the Popular Interpretation of Scripture.*

TO say that the Bible is as often interpreted by the Hymn Book of the Dissenter as it is by the Prayer Book of the Churchman may startle some persons, but it is nevertheless true. The impressions which are received from the one not unfrequently bias the interpretation given to the other. Embodying, as popular hymns do, almost every shade of theological sentiment; forming, in their use, no unimportant part of public worship; committed to memory in early youth; meditated upon in the closet; recited in seasons of joy or sorrow, and whispered in the ears of the dying, it is almost impossible to exaggerate the influence they exercise in the formation and support of particular religious views.

Far be it from us to depreciate sacred song, or even to speak lightly of an agency which has been so greatly blessed of God, both to the conversion and edification of multitudes. But it may surely be permitted us to suggest that both hymns and psalms, so called, are purely *human* compositions; that they sometimes pervert, and that they commonly exaggerate, Scripture truth; that a guard should always be kept against their becoming authoritative; and that, however touching or beautiful they may be, care should be

taken lest, as they steal into the soul, they should carry with them some seed of error, which, mingling with the purest and best affections, may become in time a master thought, which it is next to impossible to overcome or to eradicate.

Wesley's hymns come to hundreds of thousands of simple minds with a weight fully equal to that of any inspired composition, and Watts's are regarded by thousands more as scarcely second to Holy Writ.

And yet it would not be difficult to find in the productions of both these great and good men many statements which will not bear examination by the light of truth,—much that is exaggerated, or "one-sided,"—many things, in short, that distinctly bear the mark of the particular views, prejudices, or errors of the writers.

Even versions of Scripture are by no means exempt from this charge. The psalm, as it stands in the Bible, is often very different in character from the psalm as it reads in the metrical version.

Dr. Watts frankly avows that in accommodating the Book of Psalms to Christian worship, he found it necessary to divest David and Asaph of every other character but that of a psalmist and a saint, and "*to make them always speak the common sense and language of a Christian.*" That the excellent Doctor, to whom the Church is so much indebted, intended to accomplish this without irreverence, we are quite sure; but that he always succeeded in the attempt we are not so certain. He adds, "I have not been so curious and exact in striving everywhere to express the sense and meaning of David, but have rather expressed myself as *I may suppose David would have done* had he lived in the days of Christianity; and by this means,

perhaps, I have sometimes hit upon the true intent of the Spirit of God in these verses farther and clearer than David himself could ever discover. In several other places I hope my reader will find *a natural exposition of many a dark and doubtful text*, and some new beauties and connections of thought discovered in the Jewish poet, though not in the language of a Jew."

We do not quote these passages in order to find fault with Dr. Watts. He frankly *avows* what he thought it right to do, and he plainly tells us that in his psalms he is sometimes interpreting dark and doubtful texts. Our object is to show that by this open admission of one of the greatest hymn writers the world has ever seen, these compositions ought never to be confounded with the inspired truth they either condense or paraphrase; that they ought never to be used as authoritative expositions of any text or portion of Scripture; and, above all, that they should never be regarded as partaking, in any degree, of the peculiar sanctity which belongs to Scripture. Their use in public worship as the most appropriate expression of our praise, like the use of liturgies as the channels and embodiments of our supplications, all but inevitably leads to their being so associated in the mind with the Scriptures that are read, and the God that is worshipped, that they imperceptibly get exalted into a position which by no means belongs to them.

We are not among those who imagine that verse is an unfit vehicle for religious thought, or that because poetry appeals to the imagination, while religion must be exhibited just as it is,—suppression and addition equally corrupting it,—therefore it can supply nothing to the mind; for it is, indeed, a noble task "to celebrate in glorious and lofty

hymns the throne and equipage of God's almightiness, and what He works, and what He suffers to be wrought with high providence in His Church;" but when we remember how greatly this faculty has been abused; how Milton's "Paradise Lost" is commonly read and quoted as if it were an inspired production,—a true picture of God's dealings with the children of men: how Dante's great poem has long been both the source and support of all those coarse and material conceptions relative to future punishment which at once harden and darken men's minds, and dishonour God; how even a modern production, such as Pollok's "Course of Time," is in hundreds, perhaps thousands of Scottish households, venerated as a true exposition of the Divine Word, we cannot but feel that there is *some* force in Dr. Johnson's saying, that "religious truth is too sacred for fiction, too simple for eloquence, and too majestic for ornament."

Never should it be forgotten that "all the subjects of Divine revelation demand of us the most *sober and reverent* investigation; that whenever we meddle with them, we should eagerly and singly desire to seek for all *truth*, and scrupulously reject and cast to the greatest possible distance all *error;* and that to make the truth of God the subject of fanciful embellishment, however devoutly it may be done, must often tend to favour the formation of wrong ideas, impressions, and feelings."

Let it not, then, be thought needless to lift up on this subject the voice of warning. For so long as thousands are much better acquainted with David's Psalms in metrical versions than they are with the inspired originals, and thousands more build on hymns hopes and consolations which only ought to be built on the Bible, it can never be

improper to draw attention to the danger that is involved in such a course, or to show how that which, rightly used, is one of the highest sources of delight and spiritual profit, may, by abuse, easily become one of the most serious impediments to the true interpretation of Holy Scripture.

In Roman Catholic countries, *painting*, by a like perversion, has always been made a powerful instrument in promoting erroneous views, and in fostering superstition; but as this art probably misleads few among ourselves, it is not needful here to expose the delusions it has been for ages made to favour and support. D.

HYMN BOOKS.

"Apart from the utility of the hymn book (Wesley's) as a manual of devotion, it has answered another purpose of primary importance. It may be regarded as an authenticated standard of doctrine by which all the essential points of belief are clearly defined. It is common to refer to Mr. Wesley's sermons, and notes on the New Testament, as embodying *our* distinctive theology. But if I were asked by a stranger to refer him to the most popular compendium of Wesleyan doctrine, I should refer him to the hymn book. That book contains the belief of the mass of our people. Their commentaries and institutes are there. The strains which are familiar to every household, *these* are in reality the creeds and articles of a community. And so, while Charles Wesley was composing the strains which were to animate our devotional feelings, he was at the same time fixing our doctrinal standards. As long as the hymn book keeps its place in our public worship, our households, and closets, so long will the purity of our faith be guarded by the double defence of the understanding and the affections."—*Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, October, 1861.

CHURCH PRINCIPLES.

INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE.

IT may be said, in reply to our last paper, that Dr. Archer Butler, and, indeed, all High Churchmen, cheerfully grant that Christ now governs the Church, personally, though invisibly, by and through His Holy Spirit; that the claims of the Pope to be Christ's vicar on earth, and of the Romish Church to be the exclusive depository of the Holy Spirit, is utterly groundless; and that (again to borrow the words of Butler) "the Scriptures reveal to us the great truth that Christ, though locally absent, is yet mystically present," not only "to His Church collectively," but "to its faithful members individually;" that "the Lord Jesus, entire in each and entire in all," in thus becoming "the inhabitant of the hearts of His elect people," is but "fulfilling His own clear, and direct, and reiterated promises;" and that this doctrine of "the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer is the fundamental idea of all true Christian theology."

We admit all this gladly. But it does not touch the point in dispute.

The entire question at issue resolves itself into this,—Is there any evidence whatever, beyond the disputed interpretation of a text, to show that "the Fathers were justified, or that we are justified, in claiming for any class of men,—for any ecclesiastical body or corporation whatever,—*special and higher* gifts of the Holy Spirit than those which belong

to every believer in Christ, whether transmitted by and through a succession of chief pastors, or in any other way bestowed for the purpose of order, rule, and government in the Church?"

On the answer to this question everything depends. If it be so,—if it be true that men are upon the earth, and in offices in the Church, who *have received*, in whatever way, special and peculiar gifts of the Holy Ghost, authorizing them to teach, to rule, or to administer sacraments,—separation from them is indeed grievous sin and unutterable folly. To talk about "the right of private judgment" as over-riding authority of this kind is little short of blasphemy. Obedience to the Holy Spirit, no matter what may be the channel through which He speaks, is wisdom, safety, health, and true liberty. "The Lord *reigneth;* let the earth rejoice; let the inhabitants of the world be glad thereat."

But surely it will not be disputed that in proportion to the importance and imperative character of the claim made upon our obedience, is the duty and the necessity of careful inquiry as to the solidity of the basis on which it rests.

To be *deluded* in such a matter is fearful; to imagine that we are bowing to God, when we are really giving ourselves up to the guidance of sinful men; to become, however well-intentioned we may be, the instruments of human ambition, at once the tools and the victims of the cruel and the crafty, is to fall into a condition so frightfully degrading, that one shudders to think of it as the lot of any whom Christ hath made free.

But short of all this,—*far short* of these depths of Romish superstition and slavery,—*is it*, we ask, a trifling matter to submit the work of the Spirit *in the heart* to

human direction in any shape,—to accept any guidance as of Divine appointment which God has not authorized,—to admit interpretations of Scripture which do not commend themselves to the renewed heart, simply because they come to us with high endorsement,—to abandon liberty of any kind in relation to teaching, or the offering of prayer, or Christian fellowship, or holy communion in the Lord's Supper, in obedience to claims which we may *suppose*, but without sufficient warrant, to be sanctioned by God?—is it, we say, a trifle to do anything which is really opposed to the Divine will, because it may be undertaken or yielded to *under a mistaken sense of duty?*

No thoughtful man will, we think, pretend to say that on any other ground beside that of obedience, *clearly revealed as duty*, would it be lawful to submit ourselves to any class of men, however excellent they may be, who may claim to have the "rule over us" in things of God.

The whole question, then, is one of EVIDENCE.

Now, what have we to show,—beyond, as we have already said, one or two disputed interpretations,—that God *has* transmitted, through the immediate successors of the Twelve, any *special endowment*, or anything like apostolical authority, to modern Church rulers?—that when He promised to be with the eleven (for the twelfth was then absent) unto the end of the world (or age), He spoke "not to the men, but to the office, or rather to the men only as temporary occupants of an office which was to be perpetuated in the Church"?

The evidence we have is, without question, the same, precisely the same, neither more nor less than the same, which the Romanist produces in support of Transubstantiation. It is *transcendental evidence*,—evidence altogether

different *in kind* from that which Christ has given us in proof of His own mission and that of His apostles, since it is *incapable of being tested* by any faculty with which God has endowed us. It is open to every objection that Protestants have made against that which Rome furnishes in support of her favourite dogma; and to none more than this,—that by requiring us to believe *in spite of our senses*, it unsettles altogether the basis on which the proof of Divine revelation itself rests, and leads directly to scepticism in relation to the entire Christian faith.

Such is *now* the special danger that threatens Oxford; and such has always been the ultimate result of reviving High Church principles. Far from feeling surprised that the advocates of the doctrine of the succession should so frequently pave the way for the advances either of Romanism or of sceptical philosophy, our only wonder is that the disastrous consequence is not the invariable one.

To pretend, as Romanists do, that the evidence in favour of the doctrine of the Trinity is equally transcendental, and, therefore, liable to precisely the same objections as that in favour of Transubstantiation, is either absurd or dishonest; for the one is the revelation of a truth, *the subject of which*,—the essential nature of the Deity,—is altogether above and beyond human comprehension; while the other relates to that which may be looked upon and handled. The doctrine of the Trinity contradicts no faculty which God has given us; it is, therefore, to be received simply as a revealed fact relating to the Divine existence. The doctrine of Apostolic Succession, like that of Transubstantiation, stands in direct opposition to those natural faculties of observation by which alone we can test any miraculous or semi-miraculous pretensions.

We reject the supposed miracle of Transubstantiation simply because, unlike all the miracles of Christ and His Apostles, it fails to present to human faculties any evidence of its having truly taken place; and we reject the supposed miracle, or semi-miracle, of the transmission of apostolic authority, for precisely the same reason; viz., because we can find no sign whatever that the class who are supposed to have received it are in the possession of any one power or quality differing from those which are common to us all; since, unlike the Apostles, they are not able to enforce their decisions by any pains or penalties capable of being recognized as such by the rebellious, — and since they are in no respect whatever, *by virtue of their office* (for this is the only point), appreciably wiser or better than others. E.

DEVELOPMENT.

An *order* of clergy, it is often argued, is essential to the right development of Christian doctrine; for it is said, "if knowledge be progressive, Christian doctrine must be progressive likewise."

"I do not see," says M. De Quincy, "the *must;* but I see the Newmanian cloven foot. As to the *must*, knowledge is certainly progressive, but the development of the multiplication table is not therefore progressive, nor of anything else that is finished from the beginning."

Yet there is a development which is "continually going on, and *reversing the steps of past human follies.*" But we are not indebted for it to any body or order of clergy. It was priests who found a justification of persecution in the words of Scripture, "*Compel them to come in.*" It was preachers "who heard a trumpet of insurrection in the words, '*To your tents, O Israel.*'" It is a clergy to this day in America who defend slavery from Scripture, as in former days their brethren defended the "right Divine of kings to govern wrong." In all these cases the corrective has been found in the reaction of *practical piety* in the community on the interpretation of the Bible; light has come to us only through growing love; the heart has rectified the head; and without this rectification, with or without a clergy, we may fancy ourselves faithful to the Bible when we are only faithful to its misinterpretation. T.

No. 16.

EPHES. i. 14. "*The redemption of the purchased possession.*"

COMMENTATORS.—Matt. Henry regards "the purchased possession" as the Holy Spirit, connecting the words with "the earnest of our inheritance" spoken of in the same verse. Dr. Alford and most other Commentators consider the Church to be intended, referring to Acts xx. 28, where the Church is said to be that which Christ has purchased with His own blood. Some others compare the text with Rom. viii. 23, and regard it as referring to "the redemption of the body."

On these interpretations we observe, that the first seems to imply that the Holy Spirit has to be redeemed from the enemy, which is fatal to its pretensions; that the second is equally defective, since the Church is *already* redeemed, and waits only for the fulness of its joy, when it is *manifested* as Christ's purchase; while the third, true in its measure, seems in like manner to fail in furnishing an *adequate* meaning to the phrase in question.

Millennial writers in general, and Dr. Horace Bonar in particular, consider *the earth*—the material world—to be "the purchased possession" hereafter to be the abode of the risen saints. He regards the "sealed book" in the Apocalypse as signifying (in accordance with Jewish customs) "an inheritance mortgaged by its owner, but not alienated. In the Apocalyptic Vision (Rev. v., vi.), he thinks that Christ appears in the character of Redeemer of the inheritance, according to the ordinance of the *Goel*, or Redeemer, as described in Leviticus (chap. xxv.), and exemplified in the book of Ruth, and in Jeremiah (chap. xxxi.)." *

Still the interpretation is but partial. For though the

* "Prophetic Landmarks," p. 216.

Lord will, at His coming, redeem from the grave the bodies of His saints, and purify the earth as their inheritance, He is to have "the Heathen," as well as the Elect Church, for *His* inheritance, and "the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession" (Psa. ii. 8). He is to be a "ransom," not for His Church only, but for "all;" and this in a way which was not fully seen even in apostolic days, but which, as St. Paul tells us, will be "testified in due time;" *i. e.*, in its own season, in the time God has appointed.—*Alford.*

It can scarcely be doubted that when Zacharias, "filled with the Holy Ghost," prophesied, and blessed God for having "redeemed His people," he implied much more than the redemption of an Elect Church; for he connects the coming of Messiah, and the advent of the forerunner, with the salvation of Israel from their enemies—regarding it as the fulfilment of the oath and promise made to Abraham; he sees in it the glad tidings proclaimed "by the mouth of His holy prophets, since the world began."

We seem, therefore, forced to the conclusion, either that Zacharias, although "filled with the Holy Ghost," was still under the influence of Jewish error and prejudice; *or*, that he did not understand the meaning of his own words; *or*, that he interpreted them, as we do, of an Elect Church, composed of Jews and Gentiles; *or*, that in some way or other, Israel, *as a nation*, will be redeemed, and yet serve God in holiness and righteousness.

The first supposition is utterly repulsive; the second and third equally improbable; the last is that which will doubtless find its fulfilment at the Resurrection, as Paul evidently anticipates (Acts xxvi. 6—8).

Can we be wrong, then, in supposing that "the purchased possession" includes *all* that Christ died to purchase?—

the resurrection of the body unquestionably; the renewal of the earth, then purified and rendered a fit abode for the redeemed; the salvation of *all* Israel (limiting the phrase only to the extent to which it is always limited in Scripture); the restoration of *the race* of men in all ages (subject still only to the limitations of Scripture,—a limitation essential to moral agency); and all this glorious deliverance of mankind *as a whole* from the dominion of Satan, in connection with the exaltation of the Elect Church to oneness with the Redeemer, and the gradual advance of the rest, through their agency, as the Kings and Priests of the new world, in all knowledge and goodness, as the result of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

Why should we shrink from this extension of redeeming love so often hinted at in Scripture? Is anything too hard for the Lord, or too good to be believed of Him? Is anything in the way, but our own natural narrowness of conception, and want of faith and love? L.

STANDING NOTE.—Whatever may be the *apparent* character or tendency of any Articles found in "THE INTERPRETER," we wish it to be distinctly understood that *they are not intended* to encourage secession either from the Communion of the Church of England, or from any body of Protestant Dissenters. Secession leads by inevitable consequences to sectarianism; and sectarianism we abhor. Our sole aim is to promote such an amount of freedom of thought and liberty of action in church matters, *within* existing bodies, as may best tend to further that true Christian Unity which is *counteractive* of all Schism "in the Body."

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints—as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine.*

UNIVERSALISM.

ON the meaning of one little word in Scripture (πας, πασα, παν), whether translated "all," "the whole," or "every," important conclusions depend.

The Universalist tells us that since the beloved Apostle has proclaimed Jesus to be the "true Light that lighteth *every* man that cometh into the world" (John i. 9), and the Lord himself has declared that

[Registered for transmission abroad.]

He, if "lifted up" (crucified), would "draw *all* men" unto Him (John xii. 32); that since Paul has assured us that *to* Christ "*every* knee shall bow" (1 Phil. ii. 10), that "*in* Christ shall *all* be made alive" (1 Cor. xv. 22),—that He is, in deed and in truth, "the Saviour of *all* men" (1 Tim. iv. 10), the doctrine of universal salvation is plainly and clearly taught in the Bible.

He does not dispute the revelation of "hell," of "a second death," or of "destruction from the presence of the Lord," but he insists that no such intimations can ever set aside the force of such words as "all," "the whole," and "every."

Orthodox commentators, proceeding, as they safely may, on the assurance that Scripture cannot contradict itself, commonly escape the heresy in question, by *expositions* which are supposed to over-ride difficulties in interpretation.

"Christ," say they, *is* truly "the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world," inasmuch as to every man is given a conscience, by the light of which he may, if he will, discern the right and shun the wrong. The Lord *will* indeed eventually draw all men unto Himself, inasmuch as in millennial glory "every knee" will bow. He is, even now, the Saviour of *all men*, inasmuch as His great sacrificial work is *available for all*, and "whosoever *will*,"—Jew or Gentile,—may come unto Him and live. In Him all shall be "made alive," but only that each may receive "the deeds done in his body, whether they be good or bad."

He admits,—for it is impossible to do otherwise,—that *practically* few are saved,—that after eighteen hundred years of perpetual struggle, the knowledge of Christ, even as an historical personage, is confined to a very limited number of the race; and that of those who do, more or less, become acquainted with the Gospel, but a small number indicate anything corresponding to the phrase, "being born again." But deep and painful as, he cannot but allow, is the mystery involved in this state of things, he will not for a moment grant that it necessitates anything like triumph on the part of Satan; for, he argues, the salvation of infants innumerable will make up for the number of the lost; while the *possibility* that the millennium may endure for an unlimited period (the phrase thousand years being only symbolical), opens up to him a prospect before which present darkness and difficulty pass away.

The thought, that the salvation of any number, however great, of persons yet unborn, can in no degree affect the sufferings of the myriads who, in his view, *have* passed, and are continually passing, to eternal woe, does not seem to affect his views at all; for he looks at the whole question as one belonging to the Divine sovereignty, and therefore raised altogether out of the proper sphere of human love and sympathy. In his zeal to maintain the character of God as a *Judge*, he seems to forget that it is as possible to misrepresent Him as a *Father*, as it is, on the other side, to merge the attribute of justice in that of the paternal relation.

He is content to say, 'Let the consequences be what they may,—without personal faith in Christ *now*, no human being can, by any possibility, be saved by Christ *hereafter*.' The redemption may, "by the forbearance of God," he admits, avail for "sins that are past" (Rom. iii. 25)—sins committed before the incarnation, but it cannot, he says, avail for sins committed *now*, even though the sinner be as ignorant of the Redeemer as an antediluvian transgressor.

Both parties,—the Universalist on the one hand, and the Orthodox on the other,—proceed on the assumption that the word "all" must include *every individual*. It is on this assumption that they found their respective theories.

The question is,—Are they right in so doing? We say distinctly, *they are not*. We do not of course affirm that, out of the fifteen hundred places in which the word, or an equivalent, occurs, it is *never* so used as absolutely to exclude the possibility of any exceptions,—for such instances do occur,—but we may safely assert that *generally* it implies the reverse,—that *as a rule* the word "all" in Scripture is used simply to signify *the great mass;* it is the opposite of few, but not necessarily without limitation.

It would be but a wearisome task to go through the multitude of instances in which the word in question is so applied; but it is quite practicable to take any ten or twenty just as they stand in a Greek Concordance, and *test* the remainder by this experiment.

We will begin at the beginning of the New Testa-

ment. "Herod was troubled, and *all* Jerusalem with him" (Matt. ii. 8); he "gathered *all* the chief priests and scribes" (ver. 4); he "slew *all* the children in all the coasts thereof" (ver. 16); "then went out to (John) *all* Judea" (iii. 5); "*every* tree which beareth not good fruit is hewn down" (ver. 10); "so it becometh us to fulfil *all* righteousness (ver. 15); "man shall live by *every* word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (iv. 4); the devil showeth (Christ) "*all* the kingdoms of the world" (ver. 8); Christ healed "*all* manner of sickness, and *all* manner of disease" (ver. 23); "they brought unto Him *all* the sick" (ver. 24); "the candlestick (lamp) giveth light unto *all* that are in the house" (ver. 15).

We have here taken the first ten that occur, and we ask fair-minded persons to say whether, on the one hand, the supposition of *exceptions* would in any case destroy the force and meaning of the word used? or whether, on the other hand, *limitation to a few* would not do it? In each instance it is quite clear that "all" is used colloquially, as implying *the opposite* of few, but not necessarily supposing every one.

It may, however, be said that, although in *narrative* this usage of the word cannot be denied, it is not to be so understood in any statement, argument, or reasoning requiring scientific precision, such as those must do which relate to salvation or condemnation.

We shall see. Our Lord thus speaks,—"*Every* one that asketh receiveth" (Matt. vii. 8); yet, elsewhere, *not* they that "ask amiss." Again, "Ye (the disciples)

shall be *hated* of *all* men" (Matt. x. 22); yet at the judgment it is seen that certain, who spiritually understood not their relation to the Judge, offered kindness, and are rewarded for it (Matt. xxv. 35).

Paul thus writes to the Romans,—"I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you *all*" (i. 8); but had he not to weep over some? He speaks of the heathen as filled with *all* unrighteousness (ver. 29); yet recognizes their virtues (ii. 14). To the Corinthians he says,—"He that is spiritual judgeth *all* things" (1 Cor. ii. 15); and of himself, "*all* things are lawful to me" (1 Cor. vi. 12): he asserts that "*every* sin that a man doeth (excepting fornication) is without the body" (1 Cor. vi. 18); that "*every* man that striveth for the mastery is temperate" (1 Cor. ix. 25); "that *all* our fathers were under the cloud" (1 Cor. x. 1). Again, to the Galatians,—"Ye are *all* the children of God" (Gal. iii. 26); and to the Ephesians,—"Let the wives be subject to their own husbands in *everything*" (Ephes. v. 24).

In each of these instances, and in hundreds of others that might be named, it is evident, from common sense and the context, that *possible exceptions* are always supposed, although the statement, in its spirit, is absolutely true.

Now, then, let us apply this principle to the various texts which lie at the foundation of the two classes of opinions we have noticed, and see how it will hold.

St. Paul says distinctly, "*all* Israel shall be saved"

(Rom. xi. 26). How is he to be understood? Does he mean only, all the elect? Impossible! "The election," he says, has already obtained the grace. It is of "the rest," who "were blinded," that he is speaking (xi. 7). What, then, is *every* Israelite to be saved, let his sins, his unbelief, his deliberate rejection of God, be as aggravated as they may? Scarcely is this possible,—for then it would not have been said of Judas, "It had been better for this man had he never been born" (Matt. xxvi. 24). Can it mean merely that particular remnant which should happen to be living when Christ comes the second time? Impossible! for this would not agree with the statement, "God hath included them all (or rather, shut them all up together, *marg.*) in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all" (Rom. xi. 32).

Why should we thus perplex ourselves, when difficulty can be escaped by simply understanding Paul to mean, by "*all* Israel," the nation at large,—the nation *as a nation*,—the multitude, of all times and ages, over whom prophets wept—to whom they promised a glorious future—and of whom, "concerning the flesh, Christ came"?

Exceptions there may be, and *must* be; but then they are exceptions that prove the rule.

Now if this be true of the Jew, why should it not also be true of the Gentile? If the word "all," or its equivalents, when applied to Israel, means *the race*, yet not necessarily every individual of it, why should it not bear the same meaning when applied to "the world"?

If we admit that "in Adam *all* die" (regarding the death as both physical and moral), although Enoch and Elijah were translated, that (physically) "they should not see death" (Heb. xi. 5), and although St. Paul himself tells us elsewhere that "we shall not all sleep" (1 Cor. xv. 51), why should we feel difficulty in receiving the latter clause, "so in Christ shall *all* be made alive," although it be true that some, morally and spiritually, will never live, *i. e.*, never *live in Christ*, having deliberately rejected mercy, and destroyed themselves? Why cannot we receive the word "all" as in each case implying the mass,—the race *as a race*,—the whole, with certain sad exceptions?

What wretched trifling it seems, to assert, as commentators usually do, that the wicked are "made alive" in Christ, to be eternally tormented, as if this were the same as "the many" being "made righteous;" while all the while it is so plain that the Apostle is simply contrasting *loss* by Adam with *gain* by Christ; that the one is regarded as the antithesis of the other; and that both must be understood with *like* limitations.

To say, as even Dean Alford does, that in this passage "*no consequence, whether on the side of death or life, is brought into consideration*," is to deprive the argument of the Apostle both of force and meaning, since he is all through speaking of the resurrection *only in the light of blessing*. He says, "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (ver. 17).

From sheer *faithlessness*, and in mere *dread* of any interpretation, however simple or natural, which seems to favour Universalism, even our Lord's own words are commonly subjected to a process which emasculates and explains away both their point and meaning. He himself says, "And I, if I be lifted up (crucified), will draw (attract) all men unto me" (John xii. 32). What words can be plainer? Why can they not be simply received with thankfulness? The reply is,—*partly* because they cannot be made to accord with a theology which maintains that the "elect" only, the "little flock," the chosen from eternity, can be delivered from the dominion of Satan, or escape everlasting perdition; and *partly*, because the word "all" being supposed necessarily to include every individual child of Adam, the statement, if so understood, cannot be reconciled with other declarations.

Dean Alford, to avoid the difficulty, ingeniously enough, but certainly without warrant, lays the emphasis on the pronoun I, observing, "Before, the glorification of Christ the Father drew men to the Son (John vi. 44); but *now*, the Son Himself to Himself. Then it was, 'No man can come except the Father draw him;' *now*, the Son draws all (who are drawn)." But this notion is surely quite inconsistent with the context; for the declaration of the Saviour is connected, not with any comparison between the work of the Father and the work of the Son, but simply with the *triumphs* of the cross, anticipated in the words which immediately precede. "Now is the judgment

of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John xii. 31).

We have entered upon this question, as our readers will suppose, because of the bearing it has upon the views we have, again and again, thought it right to advocate.

If the word "all," in Scripture, invariably means *every individual*, and admits of no exceptions, then, undoubtedly, either the Universalist is right in his doctrine of the final happiness of all men,—be they what they may,—*or* the Orthodox, in his supposition that such expressions refer only to the *availableness* of Christ's sacrifice to all who *on earth* repent and believe the Gospel; in which case, a "little flock" only is saved, and the world at large is abandoned to Satan,—irretrievably ruined by and through him.

We cannot for a moment admit either of these alternatives. "Christ *is* the Saviour of *all men*," though "specially of them that believe" (1 Tim. iv. 10). "If by one man *the many* were made sinners, by one also shall *the many* be made righteous" (Rom. v. 19). He came "to destroy the works of the devil," and He will do it. He alone is conqueror, and He will "lead captivity captive."

But hell is no dream. Degradation and punishment are not less certain than honour and reward. Life and death are not figures of speech. The lake of fire is as much an objective reality as is the kingly crown.

We trust we have shown that in thus interpreting

the "all" of Scripture we adopt no *arbitrary* principle; that we are far from pretending that readers of the Bible, with or without evidence, are at liberty to regard the word as meaning *all* without the possibility of exception; or *all* potentially, but practically a few; or *the race* regarded as a whole,—just as may best suit their own particular theology.

If we have proved anything, it is this,—that *no other* interpretation, save the last, is ever implied in Scripture, except in cases where the word is obviously used only in a colloquial sense, or where it is applied to matters with which the conduct or character of man has nothing to do. In *the first*, as in St. Mark, where all Judea is spoken of as coming to John for baptism, common sense alone is adequate to show that it must be limited to the idea of a multitude, acting under a common and general excitement. In *the last*, viz., in cases where God is spoken of as the Creator or Disposer, the Judge or Father of us all, common sense again is abundantly sufficient to indicate that no exception or limitation of any kind is possible.

But in all other cases,—in all which involve, or are involved in, the working of that complex system which embraces man as in a state of probation; man, as fallen and redeemed, and the world as the great field of contest between Christ and Satan,—we are satisfied that Scripture *invariably* uses such terms as "all," "every," and "the whole," with a silent reference to *possibilities* which, while they do not affect the truthfulness of the general statement, render

it altogether unsuitable and unlawful for us, first, to press the word to its *extreme* meaning, and then, by speculations of our own, to endeavour to *force* such expositions into harmony with the revealed character of God.

We are satisfied that, as there are those who, having "tasted the good word of God, and the power of the world to come," may yet so "fall away, that it is impossible to renew them to repentance," while it yet remains true that believers are eternally safe in Christ; so there is a salvation of the race which is perfectly consistent with the peculiar blessedness of the elect, the condemnation of the finally impenitent, and the inspired declaration that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness."

We hold distinctly that Scripture, in revealing future retribution, divides mankind, *not*, as is generally supposed, into *two* classes only, but into *three;* viz., *first*, those who, by the grace of God, are *here* made "new creatures in Christ Jesus," and are destined to live and reign with Him for ever; *secondly*, those who, having enjoyed every advantage for knowing and loving Christ, have deliberately and *consciously* rejected His authority, and refused to have Him to reign over them,—for *such* "there remaineth only a fearful looking for of judgment;" and *thirdly*, "the *many*," whether heathen or nominally Christian, who, having been made *what* they are by and through Adam, will finally be made *other* than they are by and through Christ. These, although not REIGNING

with the Lord, will yet be subjected to His sway, and, in the world or age to come,—probably under the guidance and teaching of the elect of earth, — be brought voluntarily to choose God and goodness as their portion, and to swell the triumphs of redeeming love.

Then will it be seen by all, that "where sin abounded grace doth *much more* abound;" that if the evils entailed upon mankind through the sin of Adam are manifold and grievous, the grace and blessing procured by the Redeemer are *much more* extensive and abundant; that the blessing so neutralizes the curse, that *all* are subject,—not nominally, but really,—to *a probation of grace;* and that in every sense the bane and the antidote are co-extensive.

It will be said that a supposition like that we have advanced cannot be made to accord with our Lord's own teaching relative to the Judgment, given us in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew. As we have but recently discussed that entire passage at length,* we shall content ourselves here with simply asserting that nothing we have advanced is out of harmony with the teaching in the chapter referred to. The *first* class—the Elect Church, the Bride—*come with* the Lord to judgment, and are "the brethren" who are all through identified with Himself (1 Thess. iv. 17). To this blessed company will be given, as a reward for kindness to the suffering Church, the "righteous" who

* *Interpreter*, No. 18, June, pp. 125-7.

are "separated" from "the nations," to be partakers of the kingdom. The *second* are represented by the men who have aggravated the sorrows of "the brethren" by contempt and neglect, and who, in like manner, are "separated" for punishment. The *third* are found in that great mass from which the "blessed" and the "cursed" have alike been *sifted*. These, as we judge from other portions of Scripture, are left, *to be acted upon* by influences and motives from which, while on earth, they were debarred by ignorance and other circumstances, over which they, individually, had little or no control. When it can be shown that the probation of a negro in Africa, of a Hindoo in India, of an aboriginal in Australia, or of a street Arab in St. Giles's, has anything in common with the probation of a well-instructed Christian, it will be time enough to assert that in each case the trial and the training are alike final and complete. A.

"*All nations*" (Matt. xxv. 31—46).—To take this expression (*πάντα τὰ ἔθνη*) as referring to Christendom, is utterly untenable. It is indeed said that it denotes the Church of the Lord collected *out of* all nations; but it is impossible to show that an expression, the fixed meaning of which is so different, can be employed in this sense. Hence the only alternative is to understand the term as denoting all men, with the exception of true believers—*that is, all unbelievers;* and this interpretation being adopted, the parable preserves its own internal harmony, as well as its right position in relation to those which precede. (See "Olshausen on the Gospels," vol. iii., p. 155, 3rd Edition. Dean Alford, in his Notes, takes a similar view of this passage.)

No. 17.

Heb. xiii. 17, "*Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves.*"

Commentators.—"The obedience here demanded is not only submission to God, but *to the authority of the ministerial office*, which is of God; as certainly in all things belonging to that office, as the authority of parents or the civil magistrate in the things within their sphere."—*Matthew Henry.* "*Have the rule*," *i. e.*, "preside."—*Doddridge.*

No fair-minded reader can well doubt that the teaching of the writer to the Hebrews here is—*submission*,—not to a mere president, as Doddridge seems to suppose; nor yet to mere office, as Henry puts it, but to divinely appointed rulers, who would have to give to God an account of the souls committed to their charge.

The question for consideration is,—"Do these words truly describe the *relation* which now exists between a clergyman and his parishioners, or between any other class of minister and those who constitute his flock?" If they do, they ought to be fearlessly enforced; if they do not, they should never be used *as if they did.*

We notice the text now, chiefly for the purpose of *protesting* against all readings of Scripture, however well intended, which destroy its *inspired* meaning in order to obtain an application to existing circumstances. That such is commonly the fate of the passage before us will be obvious to all who remember how frequently it is quoted, both in the pulpit and from the press, to enforce the duty of sustaining the position of ministers of religion. The exhortations founded upon it usually run thus,—"Pay all reasonable deference to those who are 'over you in the Lord.' Sympathize with their cares, and co-operate in their labours, for they 'watch for your souls as they who must give account.'"

Now, however *reasonable* such an appeal may be, and we should be among the last to dispute its weight when suitably urged, it is perfectly clear that it cannot truthfully be based on this apostolic exhortation to the Hebrews; for the text plainly teaches *much more* than is suggested by any commentary of this character.

If Doddridge be right, the obedience required is little more than that

which is paid to the president of a public meeting. If Henry, *submission* is demanded to *mere office*, irrespective of the age or character of the man who may happen to fill it. The practical question for ourselves is,—"To whom is it due? *how far* does it extend? and *in what form* is it to be rendered?"

It is impossible that we should obtain any satisfactory answer if we omit to notice *the different position* occupied by the men respecting whom the Apostle wrote, from that which now belongs to the minister of the Gospel, whether in or out of the Established Church. The one (the ancient elder), was *divinely appointed*; the other (the modern minister), however gifted, necessarily owes his position to influence, to interest, or to popularity. The *former* was a man *divinely endowed* with a wisdom and insight far above that of the company over whom he was appointed to rule; the *latter* may be, and often is, every way inferior to many of his flock. But it is indisputable that the text, *if it apply to us at all*, must apply *just as it stands*. We have no more right to *dilute* Scripture than to exaggerate it—to take from it than to add to it. Only as it is written can it be the Word of the living God.

In vain are we told that the modern minister, while a ruler, is not a tyrant; that though he administers, he cannot make law; that he is but the executive of the body, carrying out the enactments Christ has Himself given for the governance of His Church. The reply is obvious:—"Be it so; but this is *not* the kind of obedience demanded by the writer of the Epistle. He requires *submission to authority*, and, if we understand him aright, submission to one whose teaching is more or less inspired,—whose position is that of a God-sent governor and guide,—and whose responsibility extends, not to his own soul only, but to the souls of all who are placed under his superintendence. Why then should we not frankly and fearlessly avow that the text in question *does not* apply to us; since no one is now bound to render to his religious instructor any *obedience*, beyond that which he may individually believe to be due to one who has been legally appointed to office by the bishop, or voluntarily chosen by the people, as the head of a given fellowship. In all such cases, however, the claim for respect and regard must be based, as it is in the case of other men, *on personal character*, and not on any supposed sanctity attaching either to the man or to the office.

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints—as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine*.

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THE CHURCH.

THE word "Church" (ecclesia, εκκλησια) is, in the New Testament, used in different senses. *Three* times it stands for *a mere assembly* of persons. It does so in the Acts (xix. 32—40), where the writer, in recording an account of the riot at Ephesus, tells us "the assembly" (*lit.*, the Church—εκκλησια) was "confused." *Once* it is put for *the body of Israelites* in the

[Registered for transmission abroad.]

wilderness, viz., in the Acts (vii. 38), where Moses is spoken of as he that was in *the Church* in the wilderness. In this sense it corresponds to the word "Assembly" in Deuteronomy (xviii. 16); to "Company" in Samuel (1 Sam. xix. 20); and to "Congregation" in the Psalms (xxii. 22). *Fifteen* times it indicates *a particular society* of Christians, meeting, either in one place, or in different parts of a town or city, *e.g.*, Acts xi. 22; 1 Cor. xvi. 19; Rev. ii. 8. It *never* stands for a building, although in a figurative sense it may be so used without impropriety. *Ordinarily* (about *eighty-five* times) it denotes the entire body of professing Christians dwelling in any given city or district,—in Judea, or among the Gentiles, *e.g.*, Acts xi. 26; Rom. xvi. 4; 1 Cor. vii. 17.

In all these cases the Church is regarded as an *outward and visible* thing, and, therefore, liable to include hypocrites and false brethren as well as true believers. Some of these communities are, indeed, spoken of as "sanctified," or set apart for God,—"called to be saints" (1 Cor. i. 2) and such like, but only for the purpose of indicating God's will concerning them. They are addressed rather as what they *ought* to be in consistency with their profession, than as what they in fact *are*. This is plain from the circumstance that at the time these terms were applied to the Corinthians, their fellowship was torn by contentions, and disgraced by impurity (1 Cor. v. 1; xi. 18).

So notorious did this admixture of good and evil in the churches soon become, that in the Epistles to

the Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, the Apostle addresses himself, *not* to the whole Church, but, in the one case, only to the "*saints, and the faithful* in Christ Jesus" (Ephes. i. 1); in another, to "*all the saints* in Christ Jesus" (Phil. i. 1); and in a third, to the "saints and *faithful brethren* in Christ" (Col. i. 2). It is worth notice that nowhere in Scripture are these terms applied to any persons who had separated themselves from other *professors* of the faith, for the maintenance either of sound doctrine, of pure discipline, or of greater spirituality.

Ten times, indeed, the word "Church" is used to indicate true and spiritual members, *as distinguished from* the hypocritical or self-deceived, the formal or the dead, *e.g.*, Ephes. i. 23, and Col. i. 18—24, in both of which places the Church is spoken of as "*the body of Christ*;" 1 Tim. iii. 15, where it is styled "*the pillar and ground of the truth*;" and Heb. xii. 23, where it becomes "*the Church of the first-born*, which are written in heaven:" but in all these cases it is regarded as *an invisible society*,—its members "unknown though well known,"—manifest by their spirit, but not to be recognized by any outward sign or peculiar organization.

The "Ecclesia" first appears in the New Testament in the sixteenth chapter of St. Matthew (ver. 18), where our Lord says to Simon,—"Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build *my Church*,"—the earliest notification, so far as we know, of the intention of the Lord Jesus to found *a community* or fellowship of

believers. The *basis* on which it was to rest is also here stated, viz., the simplest possible expression of Faith in the Redeemer,—"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

For the *establishment* of this Church, Peter first (ver. 19), and afterwards the other Apostles (Matt. xviii. 18), are endowed with the power of "binding or loosing," in the sense of *enjoining or forbidding*,—the sense in which these words were then in daily use, as applied to the Jewish rabbis.

Specially qualified for the work by Divine inspiration, these men were to *decide*, whenever questions arose as to what was or was not forbidden or allowed under the Christian dispensation. They do so at Jerusalem (Acts xv.), when they determine that circumcision is not binding on converts from heathenism; they do so when they declare it needful to abstain from meats offered to idols.

The pretence that this power was given, not to the Apostles only, but *to the Church, regarded as an organized body*, — that it was *transmitted* to the successors of those who first received it,—and that it is still transmissible, is a mere fiction, having no foundation whatever in the Word of God.

This is plain, from the circumstance that no such power can, from its very nature, be exercised by other than inspired men. Apart from the teaching of Scripture, which is open to all of us, no uninspired person, or body of persons, can ever authoritatively say what is forbidden or what is permitted to the

Christian. No Church, therefore, now holds "the keys of the kingdom," or can either bind or loose; since no Church rulers, without blasphemy, could say with Paul, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us" (Acts xv. 28).

That such is the true state of the case is further evident from the connection which subsists between this power of binding and loosing and that of forgiving or retaining sin (John xx. 23), words obviously used *not* in relation to the pardoning of any man's transgressions generally,—for never is it permitted to mortals, even though inspired Apostles, to ascend the throne of the Most High, and to anticipate the decisions of the judgment day,—but with a distinct reference to the infliction or removal of any disease or other calamity suffered on account of some special fault. Our Lord, on one occasion, distinctly uses the phrase, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," as equivalent to "Take up thy bed and walk" (Matt. ix. 2), and again, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee" (John v. 8—14).

Peter exercised this power when he punished Ananias and Sapphira with death; Paul when he struck Elymas with blindness; and it is to this miraculous endowment he refers when he speaks of delivering one "to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. v. 4, 5),—when he threatens his "rod" (1 Cor. iv. 21), and when he refers to the causes for which some are "sickly," and others "sleep." In all these cases,

inspired and therefore infallible guidance on the one hand, and the possession of miraculous power on the other, are clearly supposed.

The word "Church" occurs the second time in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew (ver. 17), where Christ says that if a man neglect to "hear the Church," he is to be regarded as excommunicate,—as "an heathen man and a publican." But what Church does He mean? Evidently *the only Church* which then existed, that of His own disciples, with the chosen Apostles at their head,—men already invested with miraculous power "against unclean spirits," and with ability "to heal all manner of disease" (Matt. x. 1). Of *them*, and of them only, can it ever be truly said that what they bound on earth was bound in heaven. *They alone* were assured by their Lord that they would be infallibly led by the inspiration of the Divine Spirit "*into all truth*;" and to them only was the promise made that if "two" of them "agreed on earth," as touching "anything they should ask," it should be "done" for them by their "Father which is in heaven." *

* We are quite aware that many will start at these assertions, and perhaps indignantly deny them; for at first sight they seem to deprive us of priceless promises. But it is not really so. The text, when carefully examined, obviously refers the promises in question *only* to the Apostles. Yet not the less are they our own. For if to the Apostles alone was it said, "He shall bring all things to your *remembrance*, whatsoever *I have spoken* to you;" and again, "He shall guide you into all truth," the restriction was for "our learning," that we, *through them*, might receive the truth imparted, and *know* that it was the Lord's. No calamity could have been greater to the Church than that which would have befallen it, had revelation been left, as many suppose

Properly speaking, the Church can be regarded only in one of two aspects,—visible, or invisible;—as *visible*, comprehending all "who profess and call themselves Christians,"—as *invisible*, consisting only of those *who are really* what such terms as "saints," "faithful," "elect," "chosen," "precious," and such like, scripturally mean.

The question arises, in what relation does the Church, regarded in either of these aspects, stand to Christ?

We reply, The Church, regarded as *invisible*, and as consisting only of the faithful, is, so to speak, *identified* with its Head. Such persons are said to be ONE with the Redeemer, "partakers of the Divine nature,"—

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it was, open for completion in later ages. No blessing is greater than that which *confines* all truth needful for the salvation or sustentation of the soul to the Scriptures, and *in so doing* confines the influence of the Holy Spirit to our moral nature, as distinguished from its action on the intellect. The abominations of Rome,—the corruptions of the Church in all ages,—its sectarianism and divisions,—its old superstitions, and its modern scepticisms, all alike, when traced to their root, are found to rest on the groundless notion that the Holy Spirit, although in an inferior sense, still inspires; that the creeds and discipline of the Church were, in past ages, developed under the influence of this semi-inspiration; and that every Christian still, if faithful and prayerful, is warranted to expect *light from above*, which, if not binding upon others, is at least to him as the voice of God. No delusion can be greater. It is on *the heart alone* that the Holy Spirit now acts.

For evidence of the extent of the error in question, see "Critical Appendix," by Dr. Rowland Williams, who quotes St. Basil and other Fathers in its favour; "Essays and Reviews," generally; and the Bishop of Oxford's recent sermons, "The Revelation of God the Probation of Man," in which the Creeds and the Scriptures are placed on precisely the same foundation.

"born not of man, but of God,"—and therefore, *as sure* of being, in the next world, kings and priests to God and to Christ, as they are of their existence in this. *Over* whom they are to rule, and *to* whom they are to minister, is not, indeed, explicitly stated; but of *the fact* that they will "reign," there can be no doubt.

Of the *visible*, or merely professing Church, regarded as consisting of those who,—with whatever admixture of superstition, inconsistency, or scepticism,—do really regard Christ as the Saviour, and live in *hope* of being benefited by His mediatorial work, though they know not how, it is more difficult to speak. To affirm that, if unrenewed, all such are no better than idolaters, is simply absurd; for they who say so would very properly be shocked beyond measure were these persons to fall into polytheism, and to worship Baal, or Moloch.*

To hold that to all such the Gospel is merely "a savour of death unto death," is equally extravagant; for this "greater condemnation" can only belong to those who consciously resist and reject offered mercy.

To imagine that in some form or other persons of this class will be so purified in their passage through the grave, that they will after all enter into the joys

* "The conversion of the whole people (of India) to the worst form that Christianity ever wore in the darkest ages would be a happy event. It is not necessary that a man should be *a Christian* to wish for the propagation of Christianity in India. It is sufficient that he should be an European, not much below the ordinary European level of good sense and humanity. In no part of the world is heathenism more cruel, more licentious, more fruitful of absurd rites and pernicious laws."—*Lord Macaulay.*

of the elect, is a fancy which can find as little justification in reason as in Scripture.

What, then, is to become of them?

We do not profess at this moment to be able to furnish the answer. We must content ourselves at present with endeavouring to ascertain whether or no any revelation of Scripture regarding the Church *forbids* the hope that those who are but inconsistent members of it here, shall, in the age or dispensation to come, find mercy, and,—in dishonour though it be,—advance in the knowledge of truth, and attain to better things than they loved and followed on earth?

We cannot find a single passage which is calculated to close this door of hope. Any contrary supposition must rest on the notion,—altogether unsupported by Scripture,—that there can be no union to Christ, short of the highest; that the Gospel has no work to accomplish on the earth beyond the *salvation* of the elect, and the *condemnation* of the rest; that the Redeemer can bestow no spiritual blessedness upon any creature whom He does not identify with Himself; that "the salvation of the Church,"—little flock though it be, even to the last,—is a term equivalent in breadth and compass to the "creating" of "all things new."

If it be so, *what*, we may well ask, can be meant by such *contrasts* in Scripture as the "strait gate," the "narrow way," and the "few" that enter, as compared with the various passages which speak of "the knowledge of the Lord" covering the earth as "the

waters cover the sea,"—of *all* knowing Him, "from the least even unto the greatest?"

If it be so, *where* is the reality and truthfulness of the assurances so frequently given in Scripture, that Christ is "the Saviour of *the world*" (John iv. 42); that the object of His coming was "that *the world* through Him might be saved" (iii. 14—17); that His *lifting up* should "*draw all men*" unto Him (xii. 32); that "God our Saviour will have *all men* to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. ii. 4); that Jesus suffered, "that He by the grace (favour) of God *should taste death for every man*" (Heb. ii. 9); that "He is the propitiation for our sins; and *not for ours only*, but also for *the sins of the whole world*" (1 John ii. 2)?

We know of but one way in which the force of these texts can be evaded, and that is by asserting, that if they mean anything beyond the possibility of all men being saved who repent and believe, they teach Universalism,—the salvation of *every man*, do what he will and be what he may,—a view so obviously opposed both to the letter and spirit of Scripture, that only to state it is to pronounce its refutation. But is this mode of reasoning either honourable to God, or honest to man? We think it is neither. Surely it is far wiser to accept the facts as they stand, without any reasoning at all about them, and thankfully to admit that the same Saviour who reveals the lake of fire for the conscious rejector of mercy, reveals also both the *glory* of the elect, and the *redemption* of the race.

A.

ON PARALLEL PASSAGES.

THE value of a parallel passage is, as a rule, to be measured by the degree in which it possesses a *suggestive* character. It then serves to stimulate research, and to indicate the direction in which additional light may probably be obtained. For this end even merely *verbal* references are often valuable; but, of course, only on the supposition that care is taken to ascertain *the sense* in which a particular word may, in any given passage, be used; for in Scripture, as in other books, the same word is often used in various senses, and in all such cases the *true* sense can only be discovered by observing the connection in which it stands.

No reasonable person can doubt for a moment that in order to ascertain the meaning of *particular portions* of Scripture, it is absolutely necessary to keep *the tenor of the whole book* in mind. We always take this course in interpreting a merely human composition, even though it be but a letter from a friend; and it is equally necessary to follow it in reading an *inspired* epistle. The character of the writer, his known sentiments, what he has said elsewhere, all go to explain a doubtful passage, when it occurs even in the most familiar correspondence. How much more is it necessary to keep the character and object of *God's entire revelation* in mind, when interpreting any part of Scripture!

Had the Jews done this, they would not have fallen into the grievous mistakes they did relative to the Messiahship of the Lord.

"We have heard out of the law," said they to Jesus, "that *Christ abideth for ever;* and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up — crucified?" (John xii. 34). They were so far right. Isaiah *had* said so (ix. 7). So had Daniel (vii. 14). But was that *all* that either of these Prophets had said about the Redeemer? Certainly not. Isaiah had clearly foretold His sufferings and death in the fifty-third chapter, and Daniel had said distinctly that "after threescore and two weeks" Messiah should be "cut off," but "not for Himself." Here, then, is an instance in which the neglect to notice the entire teaching led into error. In the case both of Isaiah and of Daniel, the two *apparently* contradictory passages should have been each and equally regarded; both should have been humbly received, and carefully pondered; and patience should have found her perfect work in watching and waiting for their full and final and harmonious accomplishment in God's own time.

So with ourselves. Some persons are greatly stumbled when they read that David, with all his sinfulness, is called, both in the Old Testament and in the New, "a man after God's own heart" (1 Sam. xiii. 14, and Acts xiii. 22). A reference to another portion of the same Prophet (1 Sam. ii. 35) relieves the difficulty, for *there*, referring to David, God is represented as saying, "I will raise me up a faithful priest, who shall do according to that which is in mine heart," a passage which at once suggests the *primary* meaning of the text first quoted, viz., that David, especially in his public official conduct, should fulfil the Divine will, and maintain inviolate the laws which God had enjoined. This, as a rule, he did. In two striking instances, however, he failed to obey, viz., in the cases of Shimei and of

Joab: he confesses on his death-bed to Solomon that in these instances he had not acted as he ought to have done as the ruler of the nation, and he leaves these men to be dealt with, so far as it could be done without injustice, by Solomon. Each of them, by a subsequent violation of the law, brought judgment on his own head, and died justly.

Again, in the case of Balaam. Reading merely the account given of him in the Book of Numbers (xxiii. and xxiv.), one might be led to doubt whether he ought to be regarded as a bad man, or merely a very imperfect and erring prophet. But the Apostles deliver us from this difficulty. Peter tells us that covetousness was Balaam's ruin (2 Pet. ii. 15); Jude classes him with Cain and Korah (ver. 11); and John, in the Apocalypse (ii. 14), distinctly marks him out as a type of evil.

These illustrations will suffice to show what is, properly speaking, to be understood by the injunction to compare Scripture with Scripture; and in making such comparison, a well-prepared collection of parallel passages may prove of very great service.

What we have to guard against is, allowing parallel references to mislead us, by false associations; by merely verbal resemblances; by guiding us, it may be unwittingly, into a given line of thought; by forming a sort of commentary for us, and, under pretence of enabling us to interpret according to the analogy of faith, keeping us in harmony, not so much with truth, as with what *Christians generally suppose* to be the spirit of Revelation,—in other words, in harmony with that particular system of theology which is at the time popular in given circles.

(*From* "*Study of the Bible*," chap. xxxiv.)

CHURCH PRINCIPLES.

VOICE OF ANTIQUITY.

HAVING expressed our deliberate conviction that the argument generally advanced in favour of Church authority breaks down on examination,—that the evidence offered in its support is altogether insufficient, the question naturally arises, Why then should we treat such a demand as other than mere assumption?

Dr. Archer Butler shall tell us.

He says we must not do this, because, whatever we may think, "the *interpretations* of Scripture on which the claim rests are sanctioned by antiquity;" that "the Apostles everywhere insist on the propriety of due obedience to spiritual directors; and that having themselves habituated the Church to find a definite authority the main eternal bond of that union they so urgently impressed, it is highly improbable that, when they passed away, they should leave the Church of Christ without any fixed remedy against its dissolution at the caprice of a majority."

Our reply is, that in the gift of the Holy Spirit, which is, as Butler himself admits, the Christ within, "entire in each, entire in all,"—in the *state of heart* which that great and blessed gift produces and implies, is to be found the security God has provided against disorder and dissolution; that the unity impressed by the Apostles was always internal rather than external; and that the words, "Lo, I am with you alway," if not addressed to, and intended for the Apostles alone, was a promise given to them *not* as the

representatives of an office, but as the representatives of the entire body of believers; that it is, in fact, included of necessity in what Dr. Butler himself calls, "the Christ entire in each, entire in all;" and that, wherever it has existed, it has always been found sufficient to secure order and spiritual obedience to the full extent needful for individual growth or united action.

The authority of antiquity in the interpretation of Scripture is to us of little value where it relates to matters of which the Fathers could know no more than we now do. For no mistake is greater than that which supposes that men who lived *near* the apostolic age must of necessity have been in a more favorable position for ascertaining the meaning of Scripture than those of a later day. The contrary is commonly the fact; and for reasons which no one has stated more clearly, or more ably, than Professor Butler himself.

"It seems," he says, "by some to be urged, that there is such a radical distinction between the mode of investigating truth in physical science, and in revealed religion, that whereas the alleged *facts of experience* are alone to found, and alter, and modify our theories in the one, they must be permitted little or no influence in the other, beyond that of simple confirmation; that is, that wherever subsequent historical phenomena do not seem to coincide, in every the minutest respect, with our *antecedent interpretation* of revelation, they must at once be surrendered, as doubtful, or delusive, or irrelevant." The error involved in this supposition becomes evident "when we think of the numberless instances in which the very interpretation of scriptural *texts* has been modified, or even reversed, by actual experience."

"The promises, for example, to the Jewish Church *might* have meant a gift of unconditional infallibility;—subsequent *experience has determined the true interpretation* by the errors and fall of that hierarchy. The promises to the Christian Church have been, by an immense body within it, thought to impart the same infallibility. A far simpler and more conclusive answer (to this supposition) than any critical investigation of texts, is to point to the miserable *failures* which have *historically demonstrated* that no such provision was really in the purposes of Divine Providence, or, therefore, could have been within the scope of the Scriptural expressions adduced."

"The various theories of prophecy similarly confuted; the early expectations of the immediate advent of Christ, supposed to be irrefragably deducible from Scripture phraseology; the anticipation of a permanent gift of miracles, by vast numbers still inferred from our Lord's expressions; are all instances in which the designs of God, and those words of Scripture in which they are embodied, have had their real import illustrated almost solely by the evidence of experience. Indeed, I suppose every man will admit, that the whole course of the world has been, in many respects, different from what a reader of the New Testament might naturally, at first sight, have anticipated; and that it is just this superficial difference which makes the profound real harmony between the foreshadowings of revelation and the subsequent history of man, so far as we can establish it, so peculiar and impressive an evidence of the Divine Providence that equally superintended *both*."

The force of this reasoning cannot be abated; nor can it consistently be doubted that it may justly be applied, in all its force, to the point now at issue, viz.—the authority of

antiquity as to the interpretation of those texts which are supposed to justify ecclesiastical claims.

What has experience taught us, in relation to the rule of priests; to their authoritative interpretations of Scripture; and to their views of the sacramental efficacy of water in Baptism, and of bread and wine in the Lord's Supper?

Let the history of Christendom for a thousand years ring the answer in the ears of all who are, in this respect, dull of hearing. Let the degrading superstitions of Rome, and the trivialities and ignorance of the Greek Church, furnish the reply. Let idolatries of the grossest kind; let cruelties unsurpassed by those of heathenism; let desolating wars, miscalled religious; let a closed Bible; let silenced testimonies; let oppressed peoples; let a crushed world, interpret the error, and, in so doing, vindicate the truth. It is impossible to believe that true words can have wrought out such fearful falsehood, or that a Divine tree can have brought forth such devilish fruits. "Can a fig-tree bring forth grapes, or a vine, figs?"

In vain will it be argued that these things were but the *abuses* of power. Abuses, indeed, they were, and fearful enough; but they were, after all, nothing more than the natural and necessary consequences of the assumptions, justified by Professor Butler, that apostolic authority had been really *transmitted* to those who thus miserably exercised it. They were the inevitable results of pretensions to wield Divine power, without the possession either of Divine authority or qualification. They were the natural consequence of assuming responsibilities so awful as those involved in the attempt to control the Church of Christ, without having the wisdom and the love necessary to do it.

E.

No. 18.

1 Cor. xiv. 32, "*And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.*"

Commentators.—"*The spirits of the prophets.*" "The spiritual gifts bestowed on the prophets."—*Benson.* "Α πνευμα, in a peculiar sense, from God."—*Alford.*

"*Subject to the prophets.*" "It is in their power to restrain them."—*Whitby.* "They who are divinely inspired are bound, at proper seasons, to give place to others who have been gifted with the same inspiration."—*Rosenm. and Schleus, given by Bloomfield.*

These interpretations are no doubt correct, as far as they go; for the spiritual gifts of Christian teachers, even when they involve a knowledge of things future, have no likeness to the phrensy of the heathen priests. God is the God of order, not of confusion; and from the context it is plain that this principle is here distinctly recognized. The prophets could be silent if they pleased, and were therefore bound, on proper occasions, to give place to their brethren as teachers in the assembly.

The *principle* involved is, however, one that admits of a much wider application. The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets, not only in the sense of its being possible to restrain and regulate the Divine impulse, but in the sense of *silencing* the testimony altogether. "Therefore," says the Apostle to the Thessalonians, "quench not the Spirit" (1 Thess. v. 19), evidently indicating thereby that it was possible for a man to *put out* in himself, or for a Christian assembly to *put down* in its meetings, true utterances of the Spirit of God; the reference obviously being to that special inspiration which distinguished the apostolic age, and which, so far as we know, has had no place in the Christian economy since that period.

But another form in which the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets, is brought under our notice in the Acts of the Apostles. Paul says to Agrippa, in relation to his meeting with Christ on his way to Damascus, "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision" (Acts xxvi. 19), thus indicating that he *might* have refused to obey in the matter, as Balaam did in his day, and as many others probably did in apostolic times.

Nor is this all. One striking instance is given us in the sacred record, in which even Paul himself seems, at first sight, to have acted contrary to a Divine intimation. We refer, of course, to what took place at Tyre and at Cæsarea.

At the first of these places (Tyre) certain disciples said to Paul, *through the Spirit*, that he should not go up to Jerusalem (Acts xxi. 4); yet he went, apparently taking little note of the communication. At Cæsarea the warning is repeated in the house of Philip the Evangelist; for a certain prophet, named Agabus, comes down from Judea, takes Paul's girdle, and symbolically binds his own hands and feet, saying, "Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles" (xxi. 11); upon which, not Agabus only, but Luke also, and, indeed, all of that place, including, therefore, the four daughters of Philip, *who did prophesy*—all alike, as it appears—"besought him not to go up to Jerusalem."

Yet he went; his only reply being, "What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (ver. 13). And, be it observed, his decision, although apparently so perverse, was at length recognized as right, and *in harmony with the Divine will;*

for, says the writer (Luke), "when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done" (ver. 14).

The explanation of the whole transaction will probably be found in the fact, that the Divine intimation was limited to the assurance that bonds and persecutions awaited Paul at Jerusalem. Agabus distinctly confines his message to that point; and it is only reasonable to conclude, that the utterance of the disciples at Tyre was rather the natural inference that, since danger, and perhaps death, awaited the Apostle at Jerusalem, he ought not to go up, than the actual communication they had received.

In this case, therefore, the determination of Paul to persist in his original intention is not disobedience, but courage; a determination to carry out, at all risks, that which he believed to be in accordance with the will of God, *notwithstanding* the dangers by which he now knew it was certain to be attended. The entreaties of his friends, in this instance, he seems to have regarded as *a temptation*. The advice was loving and well meant; but it was not, therefore, to control his own personal sense of duty. It was, *to him*, what the saying of Peter was to Jesus, when told by the Lord that He must go up to Jerusalem to die, "Be it far from thee, Lord;" a burst of feeling which met with the sharp rebuke, "Get thee behind me, Satan" (Matt. xvi. 22, 23).

The great lesson we gather from a review of the whole, is that nothing whatever is, *as a rule*, to be allowed to override personal convictions of duty.

We say, "as a rule," because any special instance, such as that of the command of God to Abraham to offer his son Isaac, does not properly belong to the question now under

our notice. We know not *in what way* God communicated with Abraham; but we may be quite sure that it was by means which rendered it absolutely impossible that the Patriarch should be mistaken as to the reality of the command, or as to the imperative obligation it involved to obey. When St. Paul says, that when he and Timothy essayed to go into Bythinia, "the Spirit suffered them not" (Acts xvi. 7), he does not tell us *how;* nor is there any reason for supposing that it was by a process altogether independent of his own sanctified judgment and will, but rather in such a way as to be in perfect harmony with both.

In every age of the Church, false and deceiving spirits have been permitted to delude those who wished to be deluded, and to lead astray those who love the wages of sin better than the service of God. We are told distinctly that it will be so in the latter day; for then a false prophet shall arise, which shall deceive "them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he has power to do" (Rev. xiii. 14): a state of things predicted by our Lord, when He told His disciples that, before His second advent, false Christs should arise, and "show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect" (Matt. xxiv. 24).

It is clear that, in every case, whether recorded in the Old or in the New Testament, the special communications of the Spirit of God to the spirit of man were, to those who received them, precisely what the written Word of God is to us—A PROBATION; that they never contradicted the dictates of a purified heart; that they always supposed, in order to their being beneficial, a right state of mind on the part of the recipient; that, in short, if the eye was not "single," the body, even under miraculous tuition, could

not be "full of light." It was as necessary *then* to "do the will" of God, in order to benefit by the teaching, as it is now. The safeguard from error was, with them as with us, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the heart—that unction of the Holy One by which alone the poorest and weakest believer was able to "know all things," to "try the spirits," and to distinguish truth from error.

How vain, then, is the wish for *infallible* guidance—that net of the Romanist and snare of souls. Such a method of instruction, if granted, would be our greatest curse. It would destroy, to a great extent, the *probationary* character of Divine revelation; it would make us comparatively unconcerned about the state of our hearts, since our pride would be gratified by the assurance of freedom from error; it would make us intolerant to others, and impatient of opposition,—for this is invariably the temper of men who feel *sure* that their cause is the same as God's cause; and it would, more than anything else, check that Divine growth of wisdom in the soul of man which is one of the chief ends of his residence on earth, and of his consequent exposure to the wiles of error.

Dangerous indeed is it, at all times, to believe ourselves *specially* taught of God; raised up as witnesses to, or depositories of, certain forms of truth supposed to be peculiarly imparted to us; or endowed with gifts of the Spirit differing, either in kind or degree, from those which are the common property of the Church. L.

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STANDING NOTE.—Whatever may be the *apparent* character or tendency of any Articles found in "THE INTERPRETER," we wish it to be distinctly understood that *they are not intended* to encourage secession either from the Communion of the Church of England, or from any body of Protestant Dissenters. Secession leads by inevitable consequences to sectarianism; and sectarianism we abhor. Our sole aim is to promote such an amount of freedom of thought and liberty of action in church matters, *within* existing bodies, as may best tend to further that true Christian Unity which is *counteractive* of all Schism "in the Body."

24 FE 62

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints—as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine.*

WRATH.

WE propose, in the present paper, to inquire into the precise teachings of the Bible relative to the "Wrath of God."

We are desirous of ascertaining, from Scripture alone, what is the *true* relation in which an unrenewed man, whether heathen or otherwise, really stands to his Maker. What is the state of mind, so to speak, in which God looks upon him?

C

[Registered for transmission abroad.]

The word "wrath," as expressive of the Divine indignation, occurs first in connection with the death of Nadab and Abihu (Lev. x. 6). It finds expression *there* in an awful judgment on the sons of Aaron, which comes forth from God as *the theocratic governor of Israel*, on account of disobedience. Similar examples are recorded in the Book of Numbers (xvi. 32—35; xxi. 6), and in other places.

In the Book of Joshua (x. 20); in the Second Book of Chronicles (xix. 2); and in other portions of the Pentateuch, judgments of a like character are seen to fall on the Canaanites, on Jehu, and on various offenders.

In the Prophets, the word "wrath" is applied to *different degrees of punishment*, whether inflicted, or only threatened. Isaiah speaks of "a little wrath" (liv. 8), as he looks forward to the time when Israel shall again enjoy the Divine favour. He *implies* the same thing, when he represents God as saying to Israel, "In my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy upon thee" (lx. 10). Jeremiah, describing the scattering of the people, calls that judgment "great wrath" (xxxii. 37). Zephaniah, looking forward to a special punishment about to fall on Judah, regards its approach as "a day of wrath," and "the great day of the Lord" (i. 14, 15). Habakkuk, under similar circumstances, prays God, "in wrath to remember mercy" (iii. 2); and the Psalmist, looking forward to the second and triumphant coming of Messiah, says, "He shall strike through kings in the day of His

wrath," and that "His enemies shall perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little" (Psa. ii. 12; cx. 5).

In all these places, we observe the wrath spoken of is temporal, and inflicted *in this world*. Even that which is to be executed by the triumphant Messiah is regarded as poured out upon persons who are *in the flesh*, and *in arms*, so to speak, against His authority. It is judgment proceeding against a people who, in their "rage," are vainly imagining they can break loose from the rule of a visible Christ, and cast away His restraints from them. (Comp. Psa. ii. with Rev. xix. 11—21.)

It is difficult to see that these passages have any relation to the judicial decisions of the world to come, or that they can be justly applied to the careless and ignorant around us. Yet Sunday after Sunday are they used, in all earnestness and sincerity, *as if they did*.

That they involve a great principle, belonging alike to all times, and to all worlds,—viz., that the law of God cannot be trifled with; that sinners are, in one way or other, and in one world or other, as surely punished as that saints are blessed; and that no man is able successfully to contend with his Maker,—cannot be doubted; but they throw no light whatever on the question, What is the precise condition of an unrenewed man, *as such*, in the sight of God?"

Perhaps the only passage in the Old Testament, in which Divine judgment is exhibited to us as affecting

man in a *future* state, is that in which Isaiah, speaking of "the new heavens and the new earth," in which the "seed" and "name" of Judah shall "remain" before God, says, "They shall (then) go forth, and look upon the *carcases* of the men that have transgressed: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring to all flesh" (lxvi. 24). The criminals, whoever they may be, are here represented as dead,—their corpses perpetually corrupting and perpetually consuming.—the objects, not of pity or horror, but of *abhorrence.* It is the loathsomeness of corruption, symbolizing the loathsomeness of the sin, which had deprived its victims of eternal life, and made them everlasting objects of disgust and dislike. It is this passage which our Lord quotes when He would teach the Jews what He meant by "Hell" or Gehenna.

There is not a syllable in the Old Testament which leads us to suppose, that the nations *outside* of Israel were all without hope and without God,—simply condemned criminals. The history of Abimelech, of Melchizedek, of Laban, of Joseph, of Jethro, of Balaam, and others, all teach a different lesson. Everywhere we discover *traces* of a pure worship, although too often mixed up with different forms of corruption and idolatry. These outside nations are not, indeed, like Israel, the elect of God; but they are neither disowned nor deserted by their heavenly Father.

The first passage in the New Testament in which "wrath" is spoken of *as future,* is in Matthew (iii. 7),

where John the Baptist is represented as calling upon the people to "flee from the wrath to come." But there is no reason to suppose that the Forerunner here spoke of the judgments of eternity. It is obvious that he used the phrase, in the sense in which our Lord afterwards applied it, viz., as a warning of the approaching ruin of the nation: "These be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. There shall be great distress in the land, and *wrath upon this people*" (Luke xxi. 22, 23). Dean Alford says, "John is now speaking in the true character of a prophet, foretelling the wrath soon to be poured on the Jewish nation." (So also Dr. Gill and others.)

The precise word "wrath," as indicative of the *Divine* displeasure, does not appear again in the New Testament until we find it used by St. Paul, when writing to the Romans. It occurs in that Epistle repeatedly. It is here said to be "revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, *who hold* (or, rather, keep back) *the truth in unrighteousness*"—those to whom God hath "showed" what may be known of His being and character, but with no other result than the production of greater wickedness (Rom. i. 18—32). In harmony with this teaching, the Apostle goes on further to affirm, that *practically bad men*, whether *professing* Christianity or not; men who addict themselves to the vices of the heathen ("*doing* the same," ii. 3); men who "despise the riches of God's goodness and forbearance," and

cherish "hard and impenitent hearts," treasure up unto themselves "wrath against the day of wrath,"—the day when they that *reject* the truth, and "obey unrighteousness," shall suffer "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish" of soul (Rom. ii. 5—9). Nothing can be clearer than his assurance that retribution is in reserve for the wicked; and that judgment shall fall with peculiar emphasis, on the idolatrous, the immoral, the persecutor, the despiser of grace, and the holder of truth in unrighteousness of life. But not a syllable to lead us to conclude that the worshipper of the true God, the virtuous and the just, if careless, and unspiritual, and unrenewed, are involved in *precisely the same* condemnation.

The twentieth verse of the first chapter is, indeed, commonly quoted to prove that the heathen everywhere,—the benighted African and the idolater of the South Seas,—are "*without excuse,*" inasmuch as in creation and providence alone, a revelation may be found, clear enough to involve all alike in responsibility and ruin. But this is not the meaning of the text. It refers clearly to men who have known the truth, and still *know* it, but keep it back by unrighteousness. The guilt of these persons is aggravated by the fact that God has, for their warning, *witnessed* to the truth, both in their hearts, by "showing" it to them, and in nature, by His wondrous works. Whatever may be the fact of the case, it is certainly not asserted *here* that creation and providence are adequate to instruct a heathen in the knowledge of the "invisible."

In relation to *the race* generally, the Apostle argues thus: By law—the law given from Mount Sinai, *both moral and ceremonial*,—for he does not separate them; viewed simply *as law*, and apart from any work of Christ, cometh "wrath" (or judgment); "the law *worketh* wrath;" for "sin is the transgression of the law:" hence, "where no law is, there is no transgression" (Rom. iv. 15). But from this *general* condemnation (for "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God") Christ *saves:* "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (v. 8).

On this general redemption of humanity, whatever it may involve, he founds an argument in favour of the special blessedness of the elect. If, says he, Christ died for us all, while in sin and impenitent, "how much more shall BELIEVERS, who are" justified through His blood, "be saved from wrath (judgment) through Him" (1 Cor. xi. 32; John v. 24; 1 Cor. vi. 2). "For if, when we were enemies (in our unconverted state), we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, *much more*, being reconciled (*i. e.*, conscious of reconciliation by and through faith), we shall be saved by His life" (v. 10). And then he goes on to rejoice in the fact, that as "*the many*" were made sinners by Adam, so, by the obedience of Christ, shall "the many" be made "righteous;" while they which receive "*abundance of grace* and of the gift of righteousness, shall REIGN in life by one, Jesus Christ" (ver. 10—21; and 1 Thess. i. 10).

To us it seems clear that Paul teaches that God *does*

not now look upon mankind as condemned in Adam; but, on the contrary, as brought by Christ,—even while enemies and in an unconverted state,—into a new relationship, "reconciled to God by the death of His Son."

In only one other place in this Epistle, does the word "wrath," as applied to God, occur, viz., in the ninth chapter (ver. 22), where the unrepenting Jews, then *on the eve* of their destruction as a nation,—for the Apostle was writing only a few years before the event took place,—are spoken of as "vessels of wrath fitted to destruction,"* by whose condemnation the riches of God's glory, in the calling of the elect Church, would be made known both to Jews and Gentiles; or, as it is expressed by our Lord Himself, that the Gentiles might see, and the Jews be blinded (John ix. 39).

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, renewed men are bidden to remember that they are "by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (ii. 3); and in that to the Colossians they are further reminded that once (viz., in their unrenewed state) they *walked and lived* in the indulgence of the very vices and abominations, *on account of which* "the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience" (Col. iii. 7; Ephes. v. 6).

Two things are here distinctly taught us. The *first* is, that by nature (*i.e.*, apart from Christ's redeeming

* So Doddridge and others. The best commentators, both ancient and modern, are agreed that *the Jews* are here meant. There is not a shadow of reason for supposing that the expression, "vessels of wrath," is to be taken of individuals intended by God for eternal punishment.

work) *all* men are alike, condemned by law, and liable to judgment; or, as it is expressed elsewhere, "dead in trespasses and sins;" the *second* is, that "the wrath" or judgment of God, is poured out upon men, *not* on account of their natural corruption through Adam; not on account of their being thoughtless, careless, or unspiritual; but on account of actual vice and idolatry; "*for which things' sake* the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience." Whatever may be the condition of the unrenewed in heart, *as such*, it is clearly unwarrantable to say that *here* the wrath of God is revealed as resting upon *them*.

In the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, the Jews are again spoken of, in reference to the coming ruin of their nation, as a people upon whom "wrath is come to the uttermost" (1 Thess. ii. 16).

We proceed now to notice what is emphatically called "the wrath of the Lamb" (Rev. vi. 16, 17). This phrase, which is found only in the Apocalypse, is essentially connected with the second advent of the Lord, and is exclusively used to express the judgment which, at that period, will fall upon the men who are in direct conflict with the authority of the Redeemer. It is of this day that the Apostle Paul speaks, when, recognizing the *possibility* of Christ's immediate return, he says to the Thessalonians, "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." "For ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief" (1 Thess. v. 9, and ver. 4).

It is *to this day*, or to its immediate precursors, that those passages must be referred, which speak of the *filling up* of "the wrath of God" upon the earth,—of the "pouring out of the wrath of God," and of the "treading the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (Rev. xv. 1; xvi. 1; xix. 15).

In all these cases, let it be observed, the wrath falls upon men *in the flesh*, and while on earth, and the persons who experience it are the *active opposers* of Christ's rule.

A careful review of the words translated "damnation," "condemnation," or "judgment," do not lead us to any different conclusion.

The Scribes and Pharisees,—"hypocrites," are told by our Lord himself that *they* shall receive "the greater damnation" (Matt. xxiii. 14); that it is difficult to see "how" *they* can escape Gehenna; that *he* who blasphemes against the Holy Ghost is in danger of eternal condemnation; and that they *who have done evil* shall at the last day "come forth unto the resurrection of damnation;" but there is not a word to intimate that this is, after all, but the lot of the entire race, with the exception only of the Church.

St. Paul tells us, regarding those licentious Christians who, in his day, said, "Let us do evil that good may come," that "their condemnation is just" (Rom. iii. 8); and of the apostates who shall be on the earth at the second coming of the Lord, that "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not

the truth, but *had pleasure in unrighteousness*" (2 Thess. ii. 12). We do not say that in any of these cases the word "damnation," "condemnation," or "judgment," *necessarily* means the highest form of it, —the damnation of Hell, or Gehenna; although, in *some* of these declarations, we think it undoubtedly has that interpretation. The fact that our Lord adds the words, "of Gehenna," when he speaks of the Pharisees, alone shows that the word "damnation" does not always and necessarily imply that doom. Be that as it may, it is clear that, in relation to men generally,— to the race, Paul says that "the ministration of death" (that of the law, given from Mount Sinai) is "done away" (2 Cor. iii. 11); that it has now "no glory, by reason of the glory that excelleth;" and that now, "with open face,"—without reserve of any kind, he seeks to manifest this truth "to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (iv. 2).

We are not inclined to dispute that many an amiable, but unconverted man, is practically an unbeliever, and that, as such, he has too often "pleasure in unrighteousness," but no one, surely, can pretend that this is what St. Paul *means* in the first chapter of the Romans.

On what, then, it will be said, does a doctrine which seems to lie at the very root of our Evangelical theology, —forming, in fact, the basis on which Christ is commonly preached, really rest?

We reply, Certainly *not* on any direct and explicit Scriptural declaration faithfully interpreted, but on INFERENCES; on inferences, we allow, that are *supposed*

not only to be legitimate, but *necessary;* on conclusions, which are drawn chiefly from the words of Christ himself; but still on human inferences. The doctrine in question is one, which, like many others, although not to be *read* in Holy Scripture, may, it is believed by Christians generally, be clearly *proved* therefrom.

We do not say that anything is to be *rejected* simply because it cannot be found in so many direct words in Scripture; or, that nothing should be believed which is arrived at only by a process of deduction. But we do say, that no doctrine which is based on *inference,* can ever have *the same authority* as that which rests on *fact,*—using that term as indicative of direct and explicit revelation.

The reason is obvious. In all inferential conclusions, a human, and therefore imperfect element is introduced, which carries with it, of necessity, the liability to err. We hold, therefore, that all conclusions thus arrived at are open to question, in a sense which by no means applies to any plain declaration made either by Christ or His Apostles.

In our next paper we propose seriously and reverentially, but in an independent spirit, to examine the texts from which it is concluded that every unconverted person trembles on the verge of "the second death."

A.

TRUTH.

BY Truth, we mean here DIVINE TRUTH; that to which wise and good men have, in all ages, bowed with reverence and affection; which was once *embodied* upon earth in the human form of One, who could without presumption say, "I am the Truth;" and which is now revealed to the children of men in the Bible.

We do not confine the term, as is too commonly done, to any given circle of doctrine, or to any mere summary of precepts, however carefully drawn from Scripture. We include, without exception, everything that is revealed in Holy Writ.

The *professed* friends of truth are many. Its real votaries —those who love it above everything else—are probably much fewer than is generally imagined.

It may not be amiss, then, for each of us to inquire *at home*, what we are doing to *help* the truth, in the hard struggle it has to endure, even for existence, in a world so dark, and selfish, and unconcerned, as this is?

The question cannot be made too personal. We shall have to answer it at the bar of God; it is but prudent, therefore, to interrogate oneself regarding it now.

An inquiry or two, such as the following, may perhaps aid us in arriving at a just conclusion:—

I. Do I set out with a conviction, that Scripture is an *unexhausted* mine, and therefore, as yet, but imperfectly understood? *or*, do I yield to the persuasion that *all truth*,

all important truth at least, is embodied in our existing Christianity, and expounded, Sunday after Sunday, in the various churches and chapels of our land? If the latter be my conviction, it is simply impossible that I can search the Scriptures with any higher view than the desire of finding truth *on my side*.

II. How do I regard those who, although living a Christian life "in all holy conversation and godliness," cannot view with complacency, or regard with affection and reverence, *any* of the various churches, sects, or parties, into which what is called "the religious world" is at this time divided? Are such persons, in consequence of this peculiarity of their position, merely objects of pity, or of blame? Do I regard them as conscientious inquirers, *possibly* taking wider views than generally prevail, *possibly* careful above others to ascertain their Lord's will? *or*, do I simply sneer at them as crotchetty, or worse?

III. What view do I take of SECTS? Do I simply regard them as "*an offence*"—wens, so to speak, on the otherwise "fair body" of Christ, as exhibited in *my* Church, *or* the Church of my fathers? Or, on the other hand, do I rejoice in them as affording desirable channels for getting rid of opinions and controversies which, if permitted to have play within the fold, would be a continual source of doubt and disquiet?

If I take *either* of these views, I am no friend to truth. The *first*, except on the supposed possession of infallibility, takes for granted either that all truth is embodied in my Church, or that I love my Church or sect so well that, for its sustentation and peace, I am content to sacrifice everything which appears to be inconsistent with its declarations and doings. The *second* goes on the supposition that

discussion is an evil; that "testimonies" in favour of any given duty or doctrine which may have fallen into disuse, are needless; that special, and therefore *irregular* teachers —as were nearly all the prophets under the Jewish dispensation—can find no place under the Christian economy; and that therefore, in the absence of permission to *slay*, the best thing to be done is to *separate;* to place the intruder as quickly as possible in a position where, surrounded by followers who flatter him, or entangled by interests which bind him to a party, he may indulge his self-complacency by seeing his opinions reflected from all sides of the little world he inhabits, or enjoy the miserable satisfaction of denouncing as *dishonest* all who do not think it either right or expedient to follow his example.

Churches, whether established or voluntary, founded, as all existing ones are, on the possession of a common sentiment and opinion, rather than a common love and life, are always in danger of becoming, in this way, impediments to the spread of truth, and *hindrances* to progress in Scriptural knowledge. Their very constitution necessitates this consequence; and this, whether they are entered by subscription to articles, by professed adherence to a creed, or by a tacit and *understood* approval of certain theological views.

In all these cases alike, the minister is chosen, the members are added, the trust-deed is framed, for the purpose of sustaining such *forms* of thought, and *modes* of Christian life, as approve themselves to the body with which the given fellowship may be connected. Whatever interferes with this end—be it *true or false*—cannot be tolerated *there*. The innovator must withdraw, or be expelled; happy, probably, in his own esteem, if he can find other

dissidents holding *his* views, and prepared to maintain them at all hazards.

Apart from such a condition of things, the seceder becomes a spiritual outcast; branded, in all probability, with the name of an ecclesiastical Ishmaelite,—*his hand* supposed to be against every man, because every man's hand is against him.

And yet his heart may all the while be full of love to his fellows; his whole nature keenly alive to moral excellence, wherever he can find it; and his inmost convictions—those, at least, which affect spiritual life and daily conduct—perfectly at one, not only with those who have cast him out, but with Christians everywhere, who worship God in spirit and in truth.

What he wants is, *not* liberty to withdraw,—*that* no man can deprive him of;—*not* isolation—for the deeper his hold on what he believes to be the true, the more does he rejoice in sympathy; but liberty to hold and *to teach*—for freedom is but a name where this is excluded—such views of truth as have come home to his own heart with power, and which he, rightly or wrongly, regards as *the message* he has to deliver to his brethren in the faith.

But this cannot be. No Church, constituted as modern Churches are, could exist for a month on such a principle. Property, discipline, peace, would, under such circumstances, all be at stake. Discord within, and the Court of Chancery without, would be the all but inevitable ending of any attempt to carry out so wide a liberty.

YET IT ONCE EXISTED. And, but for its existence, Christianity itself, so far as we can see, would but have fared badly in Judea, during the early years of its history. True, lawless violence not unfrequently prohibited the

exercise of freedom; but the liberty was legal; the violence was that of an excited mob. The bare fact is enough, that, not in the synagogue only, but in the courts of the temple; not merely during our Lord's life, when Jesus of Nazareth might possibly be regarded as a Jewish prophet—but after His crucifixion as a blasphemer and an impostor—His disciples teach in all the sacred places of the Jews; advocate there the claims of the Messiah as earnestly as if they were addressing congregations in places of worship of their own providing; and, except when driven to it by persecution, never seek the formation of a separate platform.

By whom these regulations of the synagogue—so wide, and, as we should say, so latitudinarian—were originally framed, we know not. The early establishment of this form of worship is involved in obscurity. It *may* not, therefore, be right to claim *Divine authority* for the practice of open teaching: but it is surely fair to remind objectors that it *probably* sprang up under the special guidance of Jehovah; that it was certainly *sanctioned* by the Redeemer, and that the facilities it afforded for the dissemination of doctrines hateful to the Jewish hierarchy, were always taken advantage of by the Apostles as a *right*. Are we, then, far from truth in concluding, that an institution *thus* sanctioned, owed its laws to Divine wisdom, and that such liberty was *intended to witness* in favour of that spiritual freedom, without which no true faith can either live or grow?

IV. What views do we take of the supposed laws of society,—social understandings, as they are termed,—in relation to truth? Granting, as we cheerfully do, the impossibility of conducting modern places of worship on a basis so wide as that must have been, which included the presence and teaching of the Pharisee, the Sadducee, the

Herodian, the Essene, and, finally, the Christian also,—the question arises, "How do we deal with differences of opinion on religious subjects in social intercourse?"

Do we *taboo* everything, however important, which is likely to disturb the prejudices of others? Do we account any *manifested earnestness* in relation to the claims of truth as vulgar? Do we recognize it as a fixed point of etiquette, never to hint, except it be jestingly or sneeringly, at any view of truth opposed to that of the party with whom we converse? Do we regard this condition of things as essential to the pleasures of intercourse? Worse still:—Do we carefully exclude serious topics altogether from general society, lest, peradventure, we should be charged with cant or enthusiasm?

If we do any of these things, we are no friends to truth; and we do but deceive ourselves if we imagine that it can be otherwise. We are but the wretched slaves of the world and its conventionalities.

And not a whit less so because we may discuss favourite preachers, talk about sermons, or enlarge on the latest form of Bible distribution, or the success of ragged schools.

There are Christians—and plenty of them, too—who do not *wish* to know anything about *debated* questions; who, hating to be disturbed, either in their contented ignorance, or self-complacent doings, have long since decided that controversy is *unspiritual;* who mistake indifference for charity; dread debate, lest it should lead to doubt, and imagine they are *rising above* the region of discussion, when they are, really, *sinking below* the ordinary level of regard for what the Bible teaches, or Christ commands.

Respecting all such, Truth may well say, "SAVE ME FROM MY FRIENDS."

D.

CHURCH PRINCIPLES.

ADMISSIONS AND CONCLUSION.

WE are not insensible to the fact, that *something* may be said on the other side to that which we have advanced. We are not to be supposed to deny that the Spirit of God has frequently been manifested, even in the Church of Rome; we are far from doubting the *reality* of the grace that, in Mediæval times, converted thousands who were once heathen idolaters, and made of them saintly Christians; we hold with Dr. Butler, that "it is quite conceivable that *individuals* who never left that Church may, by the grace of God, be enrolled in the number of Christ's elect people; that some, still in it, may form a real portion of that flock on which His eye rests with peculiar affection;" that, in His abounding mercy, they may live in the enjoyment of all the varied blessings which His Church was primarily constituted to diffuse,—"sitting together" with its brightest saints "in heavenly places in Christ Jesus;" and be thus, in the eye of God, accounted true members of *it*, in being members of *Him*: and yet, that the system of polity and visible association, to which they *externally* adhere, may form *no real portion* of the Primitive Church of Christ,—may be incompatible with its original idea,—and be actually perilous to the spirit it was meant to generate and to foster. "Far, therefore, from accounting Romanists, *as such*, unconverted persons, we rejoice to believe that 'a multitude whom no man can

number' will, even out of that most anti-Christian system, be found eventually uniting with ourselves in the 'new song of Moses and of the Lamb.' "

What *might* have been the history of the Church, had the Christian faith been preserved in all its original simplicity and purity, it is, of course, impossible for us to say. The probability is, that its struggle with the powers of evil would have been *short-lived;* that "the dragon" would have swallowed up "the woman;" that the second advent of Christ would have immediately followed, and "the mystery of God" been terminated ages ago.

But such was not the Divine will. For wise and good ends, though probably beyond our comprehension, and therefore unrevealed, God permitted corruption to overspread His Church; the "earth helped the woman," but in helping her, impaired her purity; and a system took root, which, whatever its defects, seems at least to have been wonderfully *adapted* to the end it had to answer, and was certainly *over-ruled* to the accomplishment of the greatest changes the world has ever seen.

It may seem a formidable admission to make, but we believe truth demands it, that Christianity, but for its corruptions, would have run a brief course in the world; that its later triumphs were quite as much the results of craft and superstition, as of conscientious devotedness; that without the cunning that over-reached, and the conformity to idol practices that placated the barbarians, there is little reason to believe that they would have submitted, as they did, to the authority of the Church; and perhaps still less reason to suppose that the conquest would have been permanent.

"The Papal supremacy, monastic institutions, and the

use of a Latin liturgy, are all the fruits of corruption; yet all these, by Divine permission, conspired to preserve the Church from extinction in that long night which succeeded the irruptions of the Northern nations. The supremacy of the Pope kept up that intercourse between the nations of Europe which, under existing circumstances, was essential to their mutual profession of the Christian faith; the monastery was the only place in which the treasures of Divine Truth were stored; and the Latin language was the closed casket in which they were preserved. Had the Scriptures been translated out of Latin when that language ceased to be intelligible, its sacred truths would, humanly speaking, have been lost for ever, amid the barbarous dialects which then prevailed." *

Even more might be admitted, such as that this corrupt system, embodied, as it was in the Middle Ages, in rites and ceremonies suited to the capacities of a population grossly ignorant, and incapable of being elevated by ordinary means, did probably all that *then* could be done for the enlightenment of the masses; that it delivered them from oppression; or, where that was impossible, alleviated the pressure of wrong by spiritual consolations; that it humanized and softened, more or less, all with whom it came in contact; that it checked immorality; that it made life a far more sacred thing than it otherwise would have been; and that it was at once the source and sustenance of almost every thought and feeling that elevated man above the brute,—that inspired him with the fear and love of God,—that controlled his evil propensities,—and that fitted him either for usefulness here, or for happiness hereafter.

* Hallam's "History of the Middle Ages."

All this,—yea, and much more too, should we be prepared fully to admit, without being in the least shaken in our conviction that the system itself was anti-Christian, and that the principles by which it was guided and governed, identical though they be, in many respects, with what are now called "Church Principles," were injurious and demoralizing to an extent it is not easy to calculate.

Why the All-wise disposer of events *permitted* so fearful an apostasy,—for we all know that the system finally stood revealed as the enemy of the Word of God, and the persecutor of the saints,—it does not become us too curiously to inquire; rather let us be thankful for the Providence which out of so much evil still wrought good; only taking care that we do not attribute to the Author of Truth any falsehood which, at any time, may have prevailed upon earth, because *out of it*, or by means of it, He has advanced the interests of that kingdom which shall never be moved. As reasonably might we charge God with being the author of all the evil He allows; or regard Satan as the ally, rather than the enemy of goodness, because he is so often made instrumental in developing the highest forms of excellence in those whom he tries to seduce, or succeeds in persecuting.

Granting, then, that "Church Principles," even when most abused, have often been made channels of good to many; granting,—although it is merely an hypothesis,—that during centuries of Mediæval darkness, no higher form of truth could have flourished upon the earth; what does it all prove, beyond the fact that as, under Judaism, some things were temporarily allowed on account of the "hardness of men's hearts," which Christ now utterly forbids; that as once there were "times of ignorance," when God

"winked" at evils which, at a later period, He "commanded all men to repent" of; so, in the days of darkness, turbulence, and disorder, when general education was unknown; when books were scarce and few; when even Divine Truth lacked a channel of utterance through which it could appeal to mankind at large, without let or hindrance, — the Lord may have permitted, nay, even partially honoured, rites and ordinances which were in themselves but as the serpent that Moses raised by Divine command, but which Hezekiah brake in pieces as a *Nehushtan*, or mere piece of brass (2 Kings xviii. 4).

Be this as it may, let us be well assured that Church Principles, so far as they are Divine, will be found to harmonize with all true progress; with the advancement of science, the growth of freedom, and the enjoyment of every blessing that an indulgent God bestows upon His ungrateful children; that, while adapting themselves to every form of civilization, even the lowest,—and to every phase of society, even the darkest and most degraded, they will unquestionably be found to assimilate best with the higher stages of human development; with extended intelligence, with the richest culture, and with that liberty which, as the antagonist of licence, is alone worthy of the name; with all, in short, that indicates growth rather than stagnation, and reliance upon God rather than a leaning upon man.

Whether those which now exclusively put forward a claim to be regarded as Divine will bear this test,—whether they are favourable to the moral improvement of the race, and adapted to that "new estate" upon which the nations of the earth are about to enter,—must be left for others to determine. E.

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In searching for an answer, we have been led to conclude that the true explanation will be found in that prevailing neglect of the Bible, *as a whole*, which arises from its being almost always read in mere fragments; in *forgetfulness* of the particular purpose for which the Book was given; in *confusions* regarding its Inspiration; in *errors* relating to the Holy Spirit; in the confounding of *revealed facts* with *human inferences;* in Bias of one kind or other; in reading, either for "edification," or for the kindling of devout feeling, without first ascertaining *the meaning* of that which is read; in the habit of *accommodating* Scripture, or of *perverting* it, by the exaggeration, projection, or other misapplication of texts; in *allegorizing*, under the influence of an unbridled fancy; in the *abuse* of Parallel passages and references; in that *darkening* of the sense which is frequently occasioned by injudicious division into Chapters and Verses; in the *acceptance* of interpretations drawn only from Hymns; in the *neglect* and consequent abuse of unfulfilled Prophecy; in *inattention* to the character of the particular Dispensation under which we are living; in *errors* as to Church Authority, and the value of Tradition; in *undue reliance* on the professional labours of the Clergy; in turning Helps into Hindrances; and, above all, in *habitual indifference* to the demand Scripture makes on every man for prolonged study, as an essential pre-requisite to the elevation by its means of moral character.

To each of these points we propose to direct attention.

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints—as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine.*

BRITISH MUSEUM

WRATH.

WE have now to examine, carefully and reverentially, those texts which are supposed to imply, nay, to *involve as of necessity*, the doctrine that every unconverted man is to be regarded as a sentenced criminal, daily and hourly in danger of eternal woe.

They are the following:—

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark

[Registered for transmission abroad.]

xvi. 16),—a declaration of Christ himself, immediately following the command, "Preach the Gospel to every creature."

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John iii. 36), —words addressed by John the Baptist to the Jews.

"He that believeth on Him (the only begotten Son) is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John iii. 18), —part of our Lord's discourse to Nicodemus, and to be taken in connection with the declaration (ver. 3), "Except a man be born again (born from above—*Marg.*), he cannot see the kingdom of God."

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" (Gal. vi. 15).

"According to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus iii. 5).

These passages, with many others that might be named, will be sufficient to show the ground on which the Church of Christ has come to the conclusion that, apart from the regeneration of his nature by the Holy Spirit, *no man* can escape the damnation of hell; that, in short, if he that believeth *hath* everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed *from death* unto life (John v. 24), *then* he that believeth not cannot have life, but remains *in the death*

from which he might, if he would, by faith, have passed.

This inference, of course, carries with it the further conclusion that, *as unconverted,* the virtuous and the vicious stand, in the eye of God, on precisely the same platform; that, as Dr. Chalmers puts it, "a character distinguished by all that is lovely and soothing in humanity,"—a heart, "furnished, not merely with the finest sensibilities of our nature, but with its most upright and honourable principles,"—a man, "whose every word carries security along with it, who, amid all the varieties of fortune, has nobly sustained the glories of an untainted character,"—is, if not renewed in the spirit of his mind—endowed with a new nature, and so made a son of God,—the subject of "entire and unmitigated depravity," a hater of God, and a child of hell.

How can it, it is said, be otherwise, since "the Bible everywhere groups the individuals of our species into two (and only two) classes,—vessels of wrath and vessels of mercy;" since it employs these terms in a meaning so extensive, that "by each couplet of them it embraces all individuals;" since there is no trace of any middle department (*i. e.*, between the Elect Church and the eternally lost) to be met with in the New Testament; since *every man* will, at death, "be pronounced meet for the fellowship of God through eternity, or be turned into hell"?*

* Tron Sermons.

Nothing can be more brilliant than the declamation in which Dr. Chalmers, with regal eloquence, maintains this ground, regarding the conclusion at which he arrives as a necessary consequence of "the emptiness of natural virtue, and the natural enmity of the mind against God."

But is it a true conclusion? Is it Scriptural? That is the question.

If it be, Christ can bestow no blessing upon any child of Adam short of absolute union with Himself; His redemption is, *practically*, of no avail to any but to the elect; He is in no sense whatever the Saviour of *the world;* Bethsaida and Tyre, Capernaum and Sodom, the young ruler whom the Redeemer loved, the children whom He blessed, the multitude over whom He mourned, and the hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees whom He denounced, all, if unrenewed, stand on one level, and are, in the eye of the Judge, *alike.*

Now, we frankly say, Scripture does not leave this impression upon us. Everywhere we see, in the Divine Record, God's wrath executed on earth, and in the future state threatened against vice and wickedness *as such.* Most distinctly are we taught there, that *degrees,* both of reward and punishment, will mark the decisions of the last day. But there can be no degrees of sorrow *in hell;* nor can there be any shades either of honour or happiness in heaven, worthy of consideration, if each individual man becomes, at death, the companion either of angels or of fiends.

On this point, the sort of self-deception that men

pass upon themselves, is singular. They believe, or think they do, that everlasting torment in hell, and eternal absence from God, is consistent with "few stripes." They imagine that every man becoming *as happy as his nature will admit of*, is the result of being "saved so as by fire;" that the difference between the greatest saint and the most inconsistent professor, on the supposition of both being kept out of hell, is that the one has a higher capacity for bliss than the other, —that the difference, in short, is that which may be observed in individuals here—the difference, for instance, between the happiness of a child and that of an adult. And on this follows the supposition, that the future lot of a very inconsistent Christian taken to heaven, and that of a virtuous heathen in hell, may, after all, be very much alike. The confusion of thought, the absolute incapacity of realizing either the one state or the other, which this sort of reasoning implies, would be incredible, if it were not witnessed every day.

Further, in no other sense than that of a future and *discriminating retribution*, exactly apportioned to the opportunities and privileges enjoyed, is it possible to understand such declarations as these,—"The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here" (Matt. xii. 41); or again, "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre

and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes" (Matt. xi. 21—24).

We say, it is impossible to reconcile statements like these, with a theology which proceeds on the assumption that every man who is unconverted is a vessel of wrath, and will, at death, be adjudged to perdition; for, unless violently explained away, the language of the Lord plainly teaches that future judgment will affect the inhabitants of certain cities *as such*,—a declaration by no means strange to persons who believe in a "new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness;" but utterly beyond the comprehension of those who hold that each separate individual, who dwelt in the cities spoken of, is at this moment either in heaven or hell.

Equally impossible also is it, on this showing, to make anything at all intelligible out of St. Paul's assertion, that "all Israel shall be saved;" for it is clear from the context in connection with the passage, that the Apostle does *not* mean a "remnant;" it is equally clear, from the entire tenor of Scripture, that, in relation to the retributions of the world to come, the Jew and the Gentile will be dealt with on precisely the same principles; and while it is asserted again and again, that Christ is the Saviour of *the world*, and a *propitiation* for its sins, it is equally clear that universalism can find no sanction in the teachings of revelation.

What then *can* we conclude, but that "all," as used by St. Paul in reference to Israel, means, as it does almost everywhere else,—the race,—the whole; with

such exceptions only as cannot be excluded without a violation of the principle that man is voluntarily wicked, and, therefore, personally responsible.*

But THE TEXTS: there they stand, and who shall question their truthfulness or force? Certainly we shall not. We shall deal only with the inferences drawn from them, and the application made of them by mortals as weak and as erring as ourselves.

First, then, we observe, that the ordinary interpretation always proceeds on the supposition—taken for granted as unquestionable—that "the Bible everywhere groups the individuals of our species into two (and only two) classes,—vessels of wrath and vessels of mercy,—(*i.e.*, receivers of favour, and endurers of judgment); that by each couplet it embraces all individuals; that every man will, at death, be pronounced meet for the fellowship of God through eternity, or be turned into hell."

This we dispute in its professed character of *fact*. It is not true that the Bible teaches any such doctrine. It is nowhere asserted in so many words; and it cannot fairly be deduced from a careful and accurate

* We have recently discussed the meaning of the word "all," as used in Scripture, in a paper entitled "Universalism;" we only add, that since it was written we have noticed that Dr. Owen, although for a different object, has taken a similar view. He says, after pointing out many passages in which the "all" has a restricted meaning, "Therefore, from the bare word, nothing can be inferred to enforce an absolute unlimited universality of all individuals, to be intimated thereby."—*On the Death of Christ*, quoted by Dr. Bonar, in the "Prophetical Landmarks," p. 118.

survey of the entire teaching of Scripture relative to the future.

We have already written so much on this subject that it is needless to repeat the evidence on which we rely. It runs through the whole revelation; it is in harmony with the tenor of the entire book; it is sustained by a careful examination of the very texts which are usually adduced to prove a contrary doctrine. Scripture, when accurately and calmly weighed, is found everywhere to teach three things. *First*, that Christ has an Elect Church, composed of the renewed of all ages, who shall be one with Him through eternity. *Secondly*, that there are those who deliberately and resolutely reject Christ—a rejection which arises out of the fact that they *love* darkness better than light, because their deeds are evil, and for whom, therefore, there is no further hope. *Thirdly*, that *the race*, regarded as a whole,—*man*, as separated, on the one hand, from those who, by grace, "receive power or privilege to become sons of God," and, on the other, from despisers and persecutors,—*man*, therefore, regarded as embracing, in all ages, the heathen, the ignorant, the captives of superstition, the careless, the indifferent, and the ungodly,—is, in relation to Satan, *a redeemed creature;* that everything that is involved in that deliverance depends, not on his actual reconciliation, but on the RECONCILER; not on the faith exercised by the sinner, but on the work of THE SAVIOUR, wrought for every man while he was yet an "enemy by wicked works."

But, it will be said, does the New Testament anywhere speak of a deliverance, apart from personal faith in the Deliverer? Is it possible to conceive of a salvation which needs not, as a condition of its taking effect, to be received by the sinner? We simply reply, that Christ's redemption is of avail, "for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (Rom. iii. 25). Dean Alford interprets "sins that are past,"—"The sins of the whole world before the death of Christ." Mr. Haldane makes it, "The sins of the *elect* under the old dispensation." Both agree that, in this case, there is a salvation irrespective of personal faith. We need scarcely add, that, on any other supposition, infants and idiots must be regarded as lost.

The more reasonable question is, In what does such a redemption consist? What does it involve as a practical consequence? We reply, *a future probation*, in some respects corresponding to that *probation of grace* which the elect of earth have enjoyed here; in other respects different. *Similar*, inasmuch as it will involve the power voluntarily to accept of the Redeemer, or wickedly to reject Him. *Dissimilar*, inasmuch as it will be under more favourable auspices; since, then, men will be delivered from the "captivity" of Satan; the great enemy will be bound; and trial will show that it is but too possible for man to fall, even apart from the influence of outward temptation. Probation *now* is for a kingly crown; probation *then* will be simply for citizenship. Then, we trust, the fallen will be *few;* for "the veil of the covering," that is now

over all nations, will be taken off, and "death will be swallowed up of victory" (compare carefully Isaiah xxv. 6—8 with 1 Cor. xv. 54, 55).

Need we say that such a deliverance, *accomplished only through and by death*, must, from its very nature, be totally distinct from that high and blessed union with the Redeemer, which is effected by the Holy Spirit *here*,—which is, in fact, "a present salvation;" the passing from death unto life *now;* a precursive victory over Satan; the pledge and the foretaste of a blessedness which will be consummated when, as perfected co-workers with God and with Christ, in the love and service of the world to come, such saved ones enter upon that joy of their Lord, which they have, in some slight degree, anticipated while on earth.

Viewed in this light, the texts in question become clear, and are seen to harmonize with every other portion of Holy Writ. For, *first*, they all go on the supposition that the persons of whom they are spoken have *heard* the Gospel, and either accepted or rejected it. He that "believeth not" is the antithesis to "he that believeth;" neither the one phrase nor the other applying to those who have never known the Gospel in such a sense, as to have either loved or hated it, accepted or rejected it. *Secondly*, the wrath that abideth—the condemnation already pronounced—is as evidently, that which is incurred or confirmed by an actual rejection of grace. The man is condemned, it is expressly said, "*because he hath not believed.*" These words were addressed to men who, with the

Scriptures of the Old Testament in their hands, and professedly honouring the Prophets, whose predictions they despised, were daily witnesses of *miracles* of beneficence; men on whom overwhelming evidence only produced ever-deepening hate; men who not only rejected and crucified Messiah, in spite of His undeniable claim to their homage, but consciously and deliberately persisted in the wrong, because their deeds were evil. There is nothing whatever to show that the passages referred to, are intended to distinguish the regenerate from the unregenerate, or the spiritual from the worldly. On the contrary, they distinctly point to the wicked persecutor, and to the *hater* of light. *Thirdly*, the "new birth," and "the kingdom," —the "new creature," and "eternal life,"—the "renewing of the Holy Ghost," and freedom from liability even to judgment—as evidently go together. They indicate the blessedness of those who, in the age to come, shall be one with Christ, kings and priests, sharers alike in His throne and His priesthood. To this dignity Nicodemus, who probably regarded it as his *birthright*, could not attain, or even discern its character, without the new birth. Israel *as a whole*, may, indeed, be "saved," but nowhere are we told that it shall attain to the position that it might have occupied, had the nation made its "calling and election sure."

Other passages of Scripture indicate this distinction still more clearly. "To as many (*i. e.*, of the Jews) as received Him, to them gave He power (or privilege—

Marg.) to become the *sons of God*, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 12, 13). To such "there is *now* no condemnation" (Rom. viii. 1). "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" "In all things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (ver. 33—37). "When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned (judged) with the world" (1 Cor. xi. 32). To apply these texts indiscriminately to every man who escapes the final doom of the impenitent, is to destroy their force, and to deprive them of much of their meaning.

The *true inference* to be drawn from the texts we have been considering, and from Scripture generally, is, in our view, *not* that the Divine vengeance still impends over the race; *not* that *man as man*, regarded apart from the enjoyment of a special indwelling of the Holy Spirit, is simply a vessel of wrath; not that the mere fact of the atonement aggravates the guilt of those who never heard of it; *not* that Paul's Gospel, yea, "the very substance of it," consists in his teaching how "wrath might be averted, and God pacified;"* not that Divine grace is but an expression of the mercy that snatches here and there a sinner from the horrors of interminable woe,—but that there is "*a prize* of our high calling in Christ Jesus," which may be gained or

* *Christian Observer*, Dec., 1861, pp. 945—50.

lost; that there is, for every man, a world of dishonour, or one of honour; a freedom from judgment, or a being liable to it; a future bliss, or a future sorrowing; a present salvation, or a future condemnation; a hell for the irreclaimably impenitent; a heaven for the new-born sons of God; a probation, yet to come, for the helpless and the weak; a world of retribution *so exact*, that no diversity of character, no accident of position, no favouring or unfavouring circumstance, shall, in the slightest degree, affect the justice of its decisions, or the integrity of its awards.

Far be it from us to deny that an element of fear mingles with the element of grace in the Gospel. If it were not so, it would be a gospel out of harmony with the moral instincts of the sinner. For whence the *unrest* which distinguishes him in life, or the prospective alarm which no casuistry can shut out in death, if it comes not from the deepest convictions of his soul, however neglected or crushed, that life, viewed without reference to futurity, is a failure, and that man is both a sinner and an exile? Whence, but from the instinctive consciousness that earth is but vanity, and the world that is invisible the only reality, comes that "sublime home-sickness," as it has been well called, which makes the young, as a rule, die so happily?

We repeat, "a religion altogether dissociated from fear" must be, man being what he is, "emasculate and unavailing;" but, on the other hand, a religion based on fear, or one the *chief element* of which is terror, can, in itself, never bring forth better fruit than a

selfish dread, or an equally selfish hope. That much, very much, of our popular Christianity is of this kind can scarcely be doubted; but we firmly protest against the Bible being made in any way responsible for so monstrous a result.

We fully admit that much secular excellence may, and often does, exist, where the love of God, as the supreme good, may be wanting; that moral beauty in the character by no means necessarily implies the possession of a new heart and a right spirit; that it is, in itself, no evidence whatever that the man thus rendered loveable to his fellows, is also one with Christ, or could, in any fitting sense of the term, be styled "a saint," a "faithful brother in the Lord," or one "chosen from the foundation of the world," and predestinated to "eternal life."

But we do hold that such are not to be confounded with the opposers of all righteousness, or the persecutors of the Church; that we have *no right to assume* that, in the production of a lovely character, the Spirit of God has had *no part;* or that because, in such, there may be an obvious unfitness for the higher employments of the unseen world, that *therefore,* they can be fit for nothing better than the eternal companionship of the devil and his angels.

Yet to these extravagances are even the best of men driven in support of the theory,—theological, but not Scriptural,—that the unconverted, although, in a sense, the objects of the Divine pity, are yet *practically,* and for ever, the subjects of undying wrath. A.

PRIMITIVE THEOLOGY.

THE history of the Divine life and of religious thought, as it appeared in the first age of Christianity, and as it is developed to us in the sacred writings, is full of interest to the Christian student. *There* we see, as in a glass, reflections—broken, indeed, and very imperfect, but still reflections—of the Saviour's life and teaching, as they were exhibited in the tone of mind and style of character of His immediate disciples and followers. *There* we learn what Christianity was intended to be and to do on the earth; and there, if anywhere, we must look for examples of the purest and simplest faith that has yet existed among the children of men.

Two points in that history seem to be worthy of consideration. The *first* is, the fact, that the root of the Divine life in the early Church is always in Scripture represented as lying in the direct reception into the heart of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. The *second*, that this Divine gift, according to the same inspired record, does not seem to have been bestowed exclusively for the purpose of enabling those who received it to believe on Christ, but rather—*in conformity with the Divine promise*—as the fruit or reward of a faith already exercised.

Peter in his first sermon distinctly recognizes the *promise* when, after directly charging upon his hearers the guilt of having "by wicked hands crucified and slain" their Lord, he adds, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and *ye shall*

receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts ii. 38, 39).

Three thousand persons that day yielded to his address, and were added to the Church. No sign manifested their reception of the Holy One; no power to work wonders accompanied their submission; but *a Divine fear of evil*—a steadfast continuance in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in breaking of bread and in prayer—a holy disinterestedness, such as the world had never before seen—a spirit of gladness and singleness of heart, gratitude to God, and "favour with all the people," furnished abundant evidence of the indwelling of that Spirit of Truth and Love, which at once separated them from all unbelievers, and united them to Christ and to one another. So, "walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, they were multiplied" (Acts ii. 41—47; ix. 31).

The proof furnished us of their progress in the Divine life is found in *their sympathy* with one another. "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul." It is not said they were of one judgment; there is no reason to suppose that this was the case, for the bond that united them was not identity of opinion, but affinity of nature; it was enough that they should be "of one heart and of one soul," each one so thoroughly loving his brother as himself, that *under the pressure of a temporary necessity*, none of them said that aught of the things which he possessed were his own, but they had all things common. The fruit of the gift of the Comforter was *unparalleled disinterestedness.*

May it not be worth while to inquire whether the views entertained in modern times of the work of the Spirit

correspond in all particulars with those held by the primitive Church? The diversity may not be very obvious, and yet it may be very important.

The difference in result may perhaps be thus expressed. We have *many* doubts; they had *none*. *Our* religion has a great deal of sadness in it; *theirs* was full of joy. We *shrink* from death; they too frequently *courted* it. We find it all but impossible to *win* others to Christ by our conversation and example; they *magnetized* almost all they came in contact with.

The points for consideration seem to be these:—

I. Do we, as the first Christians did, *look for* the gift of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, *to follow* repentance and faith?

II. Do we desire this great donation, the last and special promise of the Redeemer, *for the same ends as they did*, viz., to give a sense of certainty as to the truth of Divine revelation, joy in the belief of it, and *high moral excellence*, as the natural and appropriate fruit of faith in the Redeemer?

III. In praying for the Holy Spirit to come into our hearts, do we, as the first Christians did, desire the gift *chiefly*, if not exclusively, in order that we may be made more loving, more disinterested, and more honourable in all our transactions with the world than other people?

IV. Do we, as they did, look for preservation from intellectual error, only by and through moral purity,—by deliverance from pride, prejudice, selfishness, and sin?

Perhaps a careful and heart-searching inquiry, in the direction indicated, might lead, by the blessing of God, to the discovery of some features in our modern theology which do not seem in all respects to harmonize with that of the apostolic age. With this object in view, the subject is commended to the serious consideration of our readers.

D.

THE SACRAMENTS.

BAPTISM.

IT must not be supposed that because we have adopted the title "Sacrament," as expressive of the ordinance of Baptism, we therefore consider the term to be an appropriate one. On the contrary, we regard it as unscriptural, and savouring of superstition.

The word "Sacrament," as originally used by the Latin Fathers, corresponded to that of "Mystery" by the Greeks, and was extended to many other things besides the two ordinances retained by ourselves. It is explained in the Tridentine Catechism to mean, "a sensible thing, which, by Divine appointment, hath the power of *causing* as well as of signifying holiness and righteousness." *

Protestants, while preserving the name, reject the definition; regarding a Sacrament *not* as the *cause*, but as a "sign and seal" of spiritual good; an *assurance*, to the worthy recipient, of the blessings of the covenant of grace.

This seems to be the view taken both by the Reformers and the Puritans. It is substantially expressed in the Assembly's Catechism,—in the Catechism of Heidelberg,—and in the Articles of the Church of England (xxv.).

Later divines not unfrequently speak of Sacraments as "federal rites," regarding them as acts by which the Christian formally and avowedly *accepts* the covenant of grace, and appends, as it were, his seal to it.

* Catech. Trident., Pt. 2, n. 10, quoted by Dr. Halley in Lectures.

All these definitions, however, but express *human inferences* drawn by conflicting theologians, and have, in fact, no authority whatever. Scripture practically disowns every one of them; since the only "seal" it speaks of is that of "the Spirit," which bears "witness with our spirits that we are born of God" (Rom. viii. 16). He who has *that* evidence of sonship needs nothing else. Other attestation has "no glory by reason of the glory that excelleth."

In the sacred record we hear of the rite first in connection with the preaching of John; and some have therefore supposed that it must have commenced at that time. This conclusion, however, is not a reasonable one; since it is extremely unlikely that Scribes and Pharisees, "all Judea and Jerusalem," would have come out to be baptized of John, had they not been familiar with such a custom. Still less would they have said to him,—"Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not the Christ, neither Elias, nor that Prophet;" for the suggestion implies a belief that Messiah or Elias would, when they came, *baptize with authority*.

Our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus also clearly indicates that, as a "master in Israel" the ruler *ought* to have been acquainted, not only with a new birth, but also with a water baptism. And so he was; for ancient Jewish writers distinctly and expressly state, that every convert to the faith of their nation was received *by baptism* as a proselyte, and, in that act, regarded as newly born, *i. e.*, born into another family.* It is, however, worth notice

* Horne's Crit. Int., v. iii. 268, 3rd Edit. We are quite aware that some have maintained that the baptism of proselytes was not practised till *after* the time of our Lord. Dr. Owen thinks it was introduced by the Rabbins, in imitation of the popular baptism of John. Can any-

that baptism never took the place of circumcision. The Jewish proselyte was both baptized *and* circumcised. The two rites appear to have had nothing in common.

Regarding baptism, then, as of Jewish origin, the question arises, "*What did it mean?*"

That the application of water, whether by immersion or otherwise, symbolically represented the necessity of cleansing, can scarcely be doubted. As practised by the Jews, it indicated that the heathen proselyte, on entering into the new family, needed to be purified from the pollutions of idolatry; and as administered by John, that preparation for the coming Messiah implied the abandonment of sin. But in neither case had it any reference whatever to that kind of uncleanness which the washings or purifications of the Mosaic law were intended to remove.

The *meaning of the symbol*, however, is not the *meaning of the act*. The act is not performed for the sake of the symbol; the symbol, on the contrary, is subservient to the act.

The question therefore returns,—*What does the act itself signify?*

In vain do we look for anything in it that suggests the idea of a "seal" or "federal rite" of any kind. We see no indication, on the one hand, of any fresh assurance that God is true; or, on the other, any "sign" that man has now affixed his "seal" to the covenant of God. These things may exist in the imaginations of controversialists; but they are not found in the Word of God.

What we *do* find is, that the act was regarded, as *the*

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thing, however, be *more unlikely* than that the Jews, with their hatred to Christianity, should borrow from it a religious rite?

avowed and open committal of the man who was baptized, to all the consequences which might follow so public a declaration of the new faith he had professed. And we find nothing else.

The heathen proselyte, in submission to this rite, abandoned his idolatry, and exposed himself to all the dangers that at any hour might arise from this forsaking of his national faith, and from the transfer of his spiritual allegiance which that act implied. The Jew who submitted to John's baptism, by so doing, *committed* himself in like manner to the teaching of the Forerunner, and laid himself open to the scorn of those who mocked at the message.

It was this which kept Nicodemus back from the baptism. He was clearly among those (chief rulers) who believed in Messiah, but "because of the Pharisees did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John xii. 42, 43). It was on this account that our Lord insisted on the *outward avowal* as well as the inward change. It was not enough to be "born of the Spirit;" he must be born "of *water*" also. If he refused this test,—the badge of his discipleship,—he must be content to rank with "the Pharisees and Lawyers," who "rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him," *i.e.*, of John (Luke vii. 30).

The later baptism of the Apostles was but a fuller development of that of the Forerunner. The former baptized "with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe *on Him which should come after him*." The latter was a public avowal of belief on a Christ that had come and been rejected. In both cases it had the same meaning, and involved similar risks.

We cannot find a single passage in which baptism is regarded in any other light. The reference of Peter to the salvation of Noah as figurative of baptism (1 Pet. iii. 20—23), teaches the same lesson. It was the faith in God, and open disregard of the scorn of an ungodly world, implied in entrance into the ark, which saved Noah and his family; and baptism, in like manner, saves those who, imitating his example, act, although under different circumstances, on the same lofty principles.

The baptisms of the New Testament, without one exception, support this view.

If, therefore, we are asked, what our Lord means, when he says, "Except a man be born *of water* and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God"? or, what is the distinction drawn by St. Paul, between the "washing of regeneration," and "the renewal of the Holy Ghost" (Titus iii. 5)? or, what is implied by the declaration, "He that believeth *and is baptized* shall be saved" (Mark xvi. 16)? our reply is,—"Let Scripture be its own interpreter." St. Paul says to the Romans, "If thou shalt *confess with thy mouth* the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. x. 9); here evidently implying by "confession," that public avowal by baptism, which was the appointed way of making it. In the Epistle to Titus, he says, "We are *saved by baptism*, (the washing of regeneration) and the renewal of the Holy Ghost" (Titus iii. 5), while, as we have seen, in writing to the Romans, he teaches that we are saved by *confession* and faith. But who can doubt that in each case he means the same thing?

The reference to Noah, made by St. Peter, points, as we have already shown, in the same direction; for while the

Deluge itself actually saved no man, the faith in God, which enabled both Noah and his family to despise a scoffing world, as certainly did. So *the water* in baptism never saved anybody; but the faith which, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, leads a man to renounce all worldly good by submitting to the rite, *has* in it the efficacy required.

The condition of the early converts, either from heathenism or Judaism to Christianity, will be better understood, if we think of the consequences that *even now* follow the baptism of a Jew, or a Hindoo. So long as a Jew, in the present day, is content to be a Christian *in heart* only, making no public profession of the change, he is subjected to no persecution. So long as a young Hindoo, enlightened by the instructions of a Christian school, satisfies himself with a kind of esoteric Christianity, no one will reproach or interfere with him. But if either of these parties submit to be baptized, the penalty is one of the heaviest that can be inflicted. It is the loss of parental love,—of all family affection,—of any property that may be coming to him in that direction,—of trade,—of social respect,—of *everything*, in short, that man holds dear. Confession by baptism is therefore, for such, essential.

But it by no means follows, that it is equally essential in cases where no such results are connected with its administration,—where, therefore, it does not and cannot *mean* the same thing. In the one case it is baptism *into a name* hitherto denied and scorned; in the other it is nothing of the sort,—being either the supposed dedication of a child to God by its parent, *or* the public expression of a hope and belief that the subject of it has been quickened into newness of life in Christ Jesus.

The Apostles themselves, who may, in a figurative sense,

be said to have been born with Christianity, inasmuch as they were made by Divine grace its children from the first, were, so far as we know, never baptized; nor is it easy to conceive, that if the infant children of converts to the faith were baptized, at the time St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians regarding the relative position of those Christians who were married to heathens, that he could have failed to say,—"Your children are baptized, *therefore* are they holy." Instead of this, he regards them as holy *by birth;* he practically says, they are not in the position of the heathen, inasmuch as they have been born of at least *one* Christian parent. (*Vide* Stanley on 1 Cor. vii. 14.)

In our next we propose to inquire how baptism was regarded two centuries later. E.

STANDING NOTE.—Whatever may be the *apparent* character or tendency of any Articles found in "THE INTERPRETER," we wish it to be distinctly understood that *they are not intended* to encourage secession either from the Communion of the Church of England, or from any body of Protestant Dissenters. Secession leads by inevitable consequences to sectarianism; and sectarianism we abhor. Our sole aim is to promote such an amount of freedom of thought and liberty of action in church matters, *within* existing bodies, as may best tend to further that true Christian Unity which is *constructive* of all Schism "in the Body."

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints—as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine*.

SIN.

"SIN is the transgression of the law" (1 John iii. 4). "All unrighteousness is sin" (1 John v. 17). It is so, because the law is a *righteous* law, "holy, just, and good" (Rom. vii. 12). It is so, because the law is emphatically a law of love. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On

[Registered for transmission abroad.]

these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets" (Matt. xxii. 35—40). And yet, so infatuated is man in his disobedience, that wrong-doing is at once his habit and his joy.

The Saviour came to put an end to this state of things; and though, to human eye, He seemed to pass away without accomplishing His purpose, it was not really so. For, among the latest words that He uttered to His sorrowing disciples before He left them, were these:—"When He (the Comforter) is come, He will reprove (or convict—*Marg.*) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, *because* (or rather, *since* or *seeing*—οτι, Luke xxiii. 40) they believe not on me; of righteousness, *since* I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, *since* the prince (or ruler—*ὁ αρχων*) of this world is (has been—κεκριται) judged" (John xvi. 7—11).

To understand this saying of our Redeemer's aright, it is necessary to bear in mind that it was uttered to the disciples *for their consolation*,—to impress them with the conviction that it was better *for them*, and, therefore, for the cause they all had at heart, that He should go away.

They, naturally enough, had imagined otherwise. If He leave us,—they might well say,—*who* is to show mankind their "sinfulness"? for who but He can unmask the heart of man? *Who* is to set forth *real* worth, since He alone can infallibly distinguish it from innumerable counterfeits? *Who* is to awaken men to a sense of their responsibilities, and to bring

before them the certainty of a "judgment" to come, when He has departed in whom all judgment vests?

The answer of the Master to these natural disquietudes is simply this,—"*I* go, in order that the objects you desire may be accomplished. *He* cometh who will achieve the victory." "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke x. 17, 18). "How can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man?" (Matt. xii. 29.) Heard ye not the voice from heaven, which "came not because of me, but for your sakes? Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John xii. 30, 31).

Such were the words of the Saviour,—yet how imperfectly have they been received! Is not Satan, it is urged, *still* the prince of the power of the air, ruling as despotically as ever in the hearts of the disobedient? (Ephes. ii. 2). What evidence have we that either his power or his malignity is diminished? Is it not plain that the reproof spoken of is simply *judicial?* That the Spirit convinces the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, only that He may thereby the more strikingly manifest the hardness and impenitence of the human heart? Is it not but too clear that the only result is greater condemnation, —aggravated ruin?

We reply, If it were so, it is difficult to see how the disciples could have received *comfort* from the intelligence; since it would, in that case, have merely confirmed all their fears, by announcing the hopeless

ruin of mankind. If this be all, they might well have said, "*Where* is the 'glad tidings' that were to be to 'all people,'—where the *remedial* character of the dispensation of mercy?" No! words must change their meaning, and the heart of the Saviour change too, before tidings so dismal can be called consolation, or such a result be entitled a victory over Satan.

Let us accept, then, the stand-point Christ has given us, as that from which a Christian man should now look upon a sinful world and its wicked ruler. The usurper is *dethroned;* the world is not *abandoned* to its iniquity; the advent of the Redeemer has *changed* all the relations of sin and of humanity.

At first sight this may not appear to be very obvious; for truly enough iniquity still abounds, and man too often seems to be as much as ever under the power of the evil one.

A comprehensive view of the great facts of the world will, however, lead us to a different conclusion. Satan is *not* now what he once was. He can no longer exercise that *direct* power over men which he so long wielded. He can no more take *forcible possession,* as he once did, either of their bodies or their minds. He cannot even *tempt* them, as he tempted their Lord and Master. Perhaps it is not too much to say that he can now do little more for our injury than evil men can do. He can *seduce;* but so can they. He can *misrepresent* God; but so can they. He can *blaspheme;* but so can they.

Like them, he can *co-operate* with our evil inclina-

tions,—avail himself of our sinful weaknesses, and pander to our follies; but he can no longer appear before God as our accuser, and he can no longer interfere with or control any one of our voluntary actions.

But is this all? Far from it. Admitting, as every Christian must, the broad distinctions which, in the eye of God at least, separate the Church from the world, the regenerate from the unregenerate, the "new creature in Christ Jesus" from the man "dead in trespasses and sins," it is impossible to deny the fact, that, *outside* the Church,—extend the term Church as we may,—among persons whom it would be folly to speak of as converted, to whom no one, with even the appearance of propriety, could apply such terms as "holy brethren," "partakers of the heavenly calling," there *does* exist an amount of virtue, goodness, reverence, awe, trust in and recognition of Christ as a Saviour, which cannot *scripturally* be accounted for on any supposition save that of a work of the Spirit.

We are quite aware that some persons will be startled by this assertion. Nevertheless, we fearlessly say,—whatever theological difficulties may seem to be created thereby,—that men *do* thus feel, and that, in a country like our own, where the light of Christianity is so widely diffused, *it is no uncommon thing* to find men whom it is impossible to regard as "converted," exhibiting in their daily life many of the virtues which are recognized in Scripture as "fruits of the Spirit," although too often in melancholy combination with much more that is, as obviously, worldly and sensual.

Let us not tremble or be timid in making such an admission. The *great facts of the world* never really contradict the *great truths of Scripture.* If they ever *seem* to do so in any particular, it is time for us to re-examine our views, in order to see whether we have not either mistaken or misrepresented Scripture in relation to the point in question.

The excellence of which we speak must have *a root.* It either springs out of unrenewed human nature, and apart altogether from grace,—which is inconsistent with the teachings of the Gospel respecting man's fallen condition; or it is inspired by Satan,—which is to make Beelzebub divided against himself; or it is the work of that blessed Spirit, from whom "proceedeth every good and perfect gift." Hesitation, in such a case, seems treason to God and goodness. But if it is His work, it has *an object,* and will have *a completion.*

Now, that which is true of *individuals* in favoured Christian communities, is *in degree* true also of mankind at large. A consciousness of sin, and feelings of sadness arising therefrom; the recognition of a righteousness extending far beyond mere conventional morality; and thoughts of a judgment to come, already flinging its shadows before, now pervade every nation, and more or less find a home in every heart. Superstition may overlay, or philosophy try to undermine these convictions,—the world may laugh, or pleasure administer its opiates,—but there they are still; in silence and in sorrow ever rising up to witness against

the transgressor, making many a Felix tremble, and many an Agrippa to exclaim, half in terror, and half in scorn, "Wouldest thou persuade *me* to become a Christian?"

Few, probably, now love evil *for its own sake*. Perhaps it is not too much to say that within almost every man, if he could but be withdrawn from the influences of the flesh, from the passions and their objects, there is *something*—a kind of better self—which acknowledges the supremacy of right. The history of the civilized world, since the days of the Apostles,—its moral life, its manners, its laws and institutions, form one grand and continuous illustration of the Spirit's influence as exercised in society at large. "It has made Christ the recognized Lord of every people, eminent either for knowledge or power."

Are we, then, to conclude that all this is in vain and for nought?—aimless and objectless, unless it be to aggravate guilt and to deepen condemnation? We *must* do so if we set out with the persuasion,—utterly incapable, however, of being sustained by any comprehensive view of Scripture, and deriving all its plausibility from the isolation and exaggeration of particular texts,—that *because* Christ has a redeemed Church, "chosen from the foundation of the world," *therefore* none else can be benefited by the redemption He has wrought; that *because* "he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be condemned," *therefore* they that have never heard, and they that have heard amiss, shall be all alike

involved in one common, wide-spread, and everlasting ruin; that *because* he that is in Christ is "a new creature," *therefore* all who do not become "new creatures" here, are for ever shut out from hope, denied mercy, and finally abandoned to Satan and his angels.

Such are the conclusions to which we are *forced*,—not indeed by any statement of Scripture, for then it would become us simply to bow before the awful mystery, but, as we have before said, by the isolation and exaggeration of particular texts, or by that inexorable logic which has for ages usurped dominion over thought, and trampled at once on the heart of man, and the character of God.

We do not question our Lord's own words, "No man can come to me except the Father, which hath sent me, draw (*i. e., attract*) him" (John vi. 44); but if any man found thereon the assertion that the sinner has no ability to seek his Redeemer, and so lead others to infer further, that men cannot be justly condemned for neglecting such a duty, we feel no scruple whatever in declaring both conclusions to be erroneous.

We know that by a similar process, and by a logic apparently as faultless, nothing is easier than to demonstrate that man, as a creature governed by motives, and influenced by circumstances, *cannot* be responsible either for his opinions or his conduct. But when the process is complete, and the demonstration perfect, we feel assured that the result cannot be trustworthy. It is not that we dispute the great dialectical maxim

that logical inferences must be true, if legitimately deduced from what is true; but we deny the *legitimacy* of the deduction; and we do this, not because we can point out the flaw which invalidates the reasoning, but because the whole subject is beyond the reach of the human faculty;—because truth never violates the moral instincts of the heart, which conclusions such as these certainly do;—because, as Archer Butler somewhere beautifully remarks, "our liability to error is extreme, when we become immersed in the holy obscurity—the cloud on the mercy-seat—of the Divine mysteries;"—because it becomes us to remember, that the conditions of human thought do not, on sacred subjects, admit of our apprehending the length and breadth of the questions involved in the decision.

Mysteries abound on every side. That one man should be born in a savage, and another in a civilized community; that one should inherit health and competence, and every mercy that an indulgent God can give, and another be born to sickness and poverty, to ignorance and evil example; that children should suffer for their parents' sins, and vice entail misery on the innocent; these, and many other things, are to us unquestionably mysterious and perplexing; but they are difficulties which may be met by the remembrance that "things are not as they seem;" that the Divine "potter," who fashions us all, has, and ought to have, power over the clay, to make one vessel to honour and another to dishonour; that happiness and

misery are much more equally divided than we sometimes imagine; that mankind are not isolated individuals, but a race; that this world is only preparatory to another; that human probation is as diversified as the human countenance; and that all things, under the control of infinite and everlasting Love, are working together for the glory of God, and the best interests of the creature: but darkness and blackness, and infinite despair, is the only and inevitable result of theories which contemplate as irreversible facts, the endless wickedness and everlasting misery of the myriads who now live, or have, in times past, lived on the face of the earth.

Happily, these theories are only *human*. Not such is the teaching of Scripture. *There* all things ripen in their time,—the wicked for destruction,—the righteous for glory,—the world for judgment. Truth is, indeed, there seen imparted to one, and withheld from another; but Love rules over all. *Some*, to whom neither conversion nor healing can suitably be conveyed by the Lord while on earth, are spoken to "in parables;" while to others, who can both "hear and understand," it is "given to know the mysteries of the kingdom." Over the first the Saviour mourns tenderly, for they are as "sheep without a shepherd;" the last He has continually to rebuke for the hardness of their hearts: but in relation to the lot of both it may be said with equal certainty, "Mercy and truth meet together; righteousness and peace embrace each other."

A.

THE SACRAMENTS.

BAPTISM.

(SECOND PAPER.)

WE have already seen that the rite of Baptism was of Jewish origin; that it was administered to proselytes; and that, while it symbolically indicated the necessity of a cleansing from the pollutions of idolatry, the *meaning* of the act always was PUBLIC CONFESSION,—such a committal before all men to the cause or name into which the recipient was baptized, as should carry with it accompanying risks; that John's baptism was the application to a *new purpose* of an already *recognized* religious act; and that the baptism of the Apostles was but a fuller development of that of John.

The great commission which our Lord gave to His Apostles,—"Go ye therefore, and disciple all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. xxviii. 19), was therefore a command, no longer to confine their ministry to the Jews, but to extend it (and with it the rite they themselves had administered to multitudes of their countrymen) to men of all nations. We see no reason whatever for supposing that when the commission was given, either a new ordinance was instituted, or the character of the old one changed. Throughout the entire evangelic history, baptism never comes before us in any *new* character,—in any *other* character than that of public confession. "Repent

and be baptized," — avow by this act your sorrow for transgression, and your faith in Jesus, —"that your sins may be blotted out," is the only message *the Apostles* ever deliver.

But after their decease it is clearly otherwise. The "mystery of iniquity"—whatever that term may be intended to include—was, we are told, at work even in St. Paul's day (2 Thess. ii. 7). Before the death of St. John, its advances were great (1 John iv. 1); and after his departure it rapidly assumed proportions which overshadow ecclesiastical history. "A dry and verbal Trinitarianism" held, indeed, its place "by the side of a Gnosticized and ascetic theological system;" but "the life-giving Gospel, speaking peace to the troubled conscience, and supplying the motives of true holiness in the doctrine of justification by faith," took its departure into the wilderness. It is hard to say at how early a period the Church imbibed a poison which, if not deadly enough to destroy life, was assuredly powerful for the destruction of true spiritual health. The Religion of Sacraments was not, indeed, fully developed till a much later period, but *a tendency in that direction* may clearly be traced, even in the second century.

That Chrysostom, Ambrose, and Augustine, or indeed any of the Fathers of the fifth century, speak either of baptism or of the Lord's Supper as Paul, Peter, and John had done, no one pretends. The apology offered for them is, *that they did better*. "The difference," it is said, "was nothing more than the ripening or natural expansion of certain rudiments which the Apostles had mingled silently, yet designedly, with the Christian institute. We do well therefore, it is urged, to derive our own notions and practices

from the *mature*, rather than from the crude era of their history." *

This doctrine of "development," as it is usually termed, leads, of course, to Rome; it has no consistent resting-place short of the Papacy. For it proceeds on the supposition, *first*, that the revelation given us in the Scriptures of truth is not perfect; that it was left to be completed by men who lived after the Apostolic age; that for this purpose inspiration was continued in the Church, regarded as an organized and hierarchical body; that it still resides there; and that it now speaks by and through its authorized earthly Head in the eternal city.

It is difficult to trace the steps—for they were at first almost unperceived—by which the ancient Church gradually lost its pristine simplicity, and came to be the very different thing we find it in all subsequent time. That it did thus change its character, is admitted by all candid Church historians. Dr. Stanley, in his introductory lecture on Ecclesiastical History, delivered at Oxford, thus expresses his own convictions:—

This period, he says, was "the period of the *greatest change* that Christianity has ever undergone; viz., the change from what it was in the days of the Apostles to what it became in the age of the Fathers,—from Christianity as we see it in the New Testament, to Christianity as we see it in the next century, and as, to a certain extent, we have seen it ever since.

"No other change equally momentous has ever since affected its fortunes, yet none has ever been so silent and secret. The stream, in that most critical moment of its passage from the everlasting hills to the plain below, is

* Taylor's "Ancient Christianity," vol. i., p. 397.

lost to our view at the very point where we are most anxious to watch it: we may hear its struggles under the over-arching rocks; we may catch its spray on the boughs that overlap its course; but the torrent itself we see not, or see only by imperfect glimpses. It is not so much a period for ecclesiastical *history* as for ecclesiastical controversy and conjecture. A fragment here, an allegory there; romances of unknown authorship; a handful of letters, of which the genuineness of every portion is contested inch by inch; the summary examination of a Roman magistrate; the pleadings of one or two Christian apologists; customs and opinions in the very act of change; last, but not least, the faded paintings, the broken sculptures, the rude epitaphs in the darkness of the Catacombs,—these are the scanty, yet, perhaps, from their very scantiness, the attractive materials out of which the early Church must be reproduced, as it was working its way, in the literal sense of the word, *under-ground*,—under camp and palace, under senate and forum,—as unknown, yet well known; as dying, and, behold, it lives."

"This chasm once cleared, we find ourselves approaching the point where the story of the Church once more becomes history,—becomes the history, not of an isolated community or of isolated individuals, but of an organized society, incorporated with the political systems of the world."

The *immediate cause* of the change, thus recorded, will unquestionably be found in the various EXAGGERATIONS which seized with such extraordinary force on the early Church; exaggerations which, *then as now*, commonly took the form of an elevated piety; which, in our own day, are often supposed to imply a more than ordinary interest in the spiritual welfare of others; and which intensify and

magnify Scripture statements, sometimes in the hope that thereby sinners will be more readily affected and impressed, and sometimes with the object of exalting Sacraments and Church Authority generally.

The *form* this error takes is exceedingly various. It changes with changing circumstances; it is modified by the state of society at any given time,—by the prevalent theology of the day in which it appears,—and by the temperament of the individual who wields it as an instrument either for good or evil. In a stern and hard age, such as that in which our Puritan fathers fought and conquered, it becomes hard and stern also. In an age of refinement and of freedom, like our own, it expends itself in animated appeals to the feelings, and in addresses which continually alternate between the extremes of terror and of love. But, in all ages, it has certain features which *never* change. Enthusiasm of this kind always appeals to the imaginative faculties; it always thinks lightly of that calm and tranquil love of truth which is so favourable to moral excellence; and it ordinarily favours such forms of persecution as are considered admissible, even though these should not extend beyond uncharitable censures and personal alienation. At no period is it able to stand before any broad or intelligent interpretation of Holy Scripture; for exaggeration is essentially narrow and one-sided, and always more or less *perverts* the Word.

The earliest evidence we have of the spread of this spirit in the primitive Church is undoubtedly to be found in the rise and rapid spread of asceticism, which at a very early period placed its mark on Christian society. Men fled from the world, inhabited deserts, renounced marriage, and denied themselves *lawful* enjoyments, under the idea that,

by so doing, they would promote godliness, and develop a sort of superhuman virtue. As a natural consequence, they failed to exhibit the less obtrusive goodness which finds its place in the ordinary charities of life.

Mr. Isaac Taylor has conclusively shown that this primal error soon affected the views taken of "the moral attributes of God; of salvation, both as to its means and end; of the bearing of ordinary morality on the Church and on the world; of the Sacraments especially; and perhaps still more, of the position, influence, and temper of the clergy."

But we must *here* confine ourselves to inquiries as to its influence on Baptism; and in so doing, we shall find at every step new and stranger exaggerations successively developing themselves.

We do not say much about the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration; for *that*, in the first instance, was probably but a new application of the Jewish phrase, "born again,"—meaning *then* (*i. e.*, in its earlier stages) little more than the declaration that the baptized had been transferred from one great family—that of Satan, into another—that of Christ. Nor are we inclined to press with any special severity upon those Churches which retain this phrase in their formularies, since *all*—Churchmen and Dissenters alike—recognize the doctrine in one form or other.

Why, we would ask, does the child of the most rigid Nonconformist, when baptized, receive a *new name*, but on the supposition that it has passed into a new state? "I baptize thee," says the Dissenter as well as the Churchman, "*into the name* of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." "*Out of what* do you baptize me?" might well be the response of the unconscious babe, could it ask the question. "You have given me a new name; you call

it my *Christian* name; is the name of my parents then a heathen one? What am I *now* that I was not before the performance of the rite? Was I, before this act was completed, in the condition of a heathen child? Was I *not, in any sense*, Christian *by birth?* If not, how have I become so, if I am in no sense whatever regenerated by my baptism?" *

So also might the adult, baptized on the supposition of his having become "a new creature in Christ Jesus," ask, "Why baptize me *into the name* of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost? Have I not always, by profession at least, owned God as my Father, Christ as my Saviour, and the Holy Spirit as my sanctifier? True, I have been careless and ungodly in my life. I have hitherto been a wandering and rebellious child, and I trust that now God has given me spiritual life. But I have never worshipped any other God than He who is revealed to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Why, then, do you treat me as if I had?"

There can be but one reply.—"*Before* your baptism God viewed you as a heathen. He *now* regards you as a Christian." But is this true? We think not. It *can* only be so on the theory that baptism is regeneration.

Again, we do not attach so much importance as many

* The following, from the pen of an eminent American Congregationalist minister, will surely be regarded as justifying the line of observation taken:—"The Church, in baptizing her children, gives there, at the font, with a most beautiful and touching propriety, what she calls the 'Christian name,' as if it were Christ's own gift; a name bestowed by Him, in which He recognizes the child's discipleship, and which, as often as it is spoken, he (the child) is himself to recognize as the calling of his Master's voice: '*And He calleth His own sheep by name.*'"—*Bushnell's* "*New Life*," English edition, p. 78.

would to the early use of the term Sacrament, as applied to baptism,—although, as we have already said, we think it unscriptural, and *now* savouring of superstition,—for *sacramentum*, as signifying the military oath of the Romans, not inaptly represented the act of those who, at the peril of their lives, *in this form* took upon them the Christian profession. The favourite appellation of the early Christians was that of "soldiers of Christ;" He being their commander; the world, the flesh, and the devil their enemies: Christian graces their armour, and martyrdom their crown: and it is not at all surprising that, under such circumstances, the baptismal vow should have been regarded in the light of an oath of allegiance to Christ.

So far, the original meaning of the ordinance was preserved; for neither the doctrine of regeneration, *as then held*, nor the oath supposed to be taken, were inconsistent with the idea that the act itself derived all its value from its being an open and unmistakeable *confession* of faith in the Redeemer, made commonly at the risk of liberty or even life itself.

But exaggerations of a different character now came in; such as altogether *concealed* the original *meaning* of the rite, and gave to it an entirely new complexion.

The *first* will be found in the idea of baptism being "a great mystery," and therefore to be accompanied by a doctrine of reserve.

That this notion was originally borrowed from paganism can scarcely be doubted; for it was but an attempt to give to a simple Christian institute the peculiar and awful sanctity supposed to attach to the "mysteries" of the heathen. The *result*, whatever might be the intention, was an entire change of sentiment as to the extent and character

of the ordinance. It was now no longer the public avowal of faith in Christ, demanded of the convert from heathenism as his first step in the new life; it was a "mystery," and therefore only for "the perfect:" men were no more to be admitted to it *on* their profession,—for its administration was sometimes delayed till the approach of death rendered it at least probable that the fearful guilt incurred by sin after baptism would be avoided.

The *symbol*, too, had now superseded in importance everything else; for it was *the water*, and not the profession of faith, which gave force and meaning to the rite. The *Bishops* for a time claimed the exclusive right to administer baptism. "It is not lawful," says Ignatius,—writing only a few years after the death of the Apostle John,—(if indeed he penned the passage at all, for this is doubtful,) "without the bishop either to baptize or to keep the feast of charity." And although this claim was withdrawn when "Confirmation" was introduced "as a sacramental complement," and it had become simply impossible for bishops to be present on all such occasions, the claim itself indicates that at a very early period the rite was no longer what it had been at its introduction.

Baptism was now "a seal" indeed, for without it the sinner could have no pardon. The *water* was everything. Christ, it was said, had *sanctified* the waters of the Jordan by being baptized therein,* and *all baptismal water* ought therefore to be consecrated. "It is proper," says Cyprian (A.D. 250), "that the water be cleansed and sanctified by the priest, that it may have the power, in baptism, to wash away the sins of him who is baptized."† Nor was this all. Strange

* See Baptismal Office of the Church of England.

† Cyprian, Ep. 70, quoted by Dr. Halley, Lect., p. 276.

as it may seem to us, Gregory Nazianzen, Basil, Jerome, and others in the fourth century, declare the water (as an emblem of the blood of Christ) to be "*red*, as it moves in the blessed font of immortality." * Such, too, is the view taken, in our own day, by Keble, in the "Christian Year." He thus writes:—

> "What sparkles in that lucid flood
> Is water, by gross mortals eyed;
> But seen by faith, 'tis blood
> Out of a dear Friend's side."

A change so radical as that we have noted, carried, of course, with it a corresponding change of view as to the *persons* to whom baptism was to be administered. If, as heretofore, to the heathen and to the Jew, it was not till, as we have seen, long after a profession of faith had been made, and never until the convert had been subjected, as a catechumen, to an extended course of instruction. The very thought of baptizing a man immediately on his profession, as Paul did in the case of the jailer, and Philip in that of the eunuch,—as Peter and the other Apostles did on the day of Pentecost, would have been regarded by the Fathers with horror. And according to their notions of the rite, reasonably so; for it was no longer simply a public confession, carrying with it all the dangers pertaining thereto, but a mystic saving rite, which at once washed away sin, and doubled the guilt of those who transgressed after receiving it.

Viewed in this light, what difference could be perceived between the child of a heathen, and one born of Christian

* The point maintained was, "the presence of Christ's blood in the water after consecration," by, we suppose, a miraculous transubstantiation. Naz. Orat. 40 de Bapt.; Basil de Bapt., lib. i., c. 2; Hieron in Esai i. 16, quoted by Dr. Halley, Lect., p. 277.

parents? *Both* were sinners, and if baptism washed away sin,—whether, in the infant, that pertaining through Adam, or, in the adult, that which was connected with personal transgression,—all alike needed to be bathed in its life-giving waters. Why, then, should it be confined to converts from heathenism or Judaism? Children, slaves, new-born infants, and adults, born and brought up in the Christian faith, alike *coveted* a share in this great mystery. Why should *they*, or indeed any, be debarred from its benefits?

So the men of earlier ages argued, and Christians of the nineteenth century have, although *in different degrees*, accepted their conclusions. For what does it matter whether baptism be regarded as, in some sense or other, regeneration; or whether it be considered "a seal," or "a federal rite," or anything else? In each case *its original meaning* is perverted, and its true signification lost. Who can wonder that, under such conditions, the Church should have been involved for centuries in controversies, to all appearance endless, as to the proper *subjects* of baptism, the right *mode* of its administration, the *meaning* of it when performed, and the *efficacy* or otherwise of its administration as a channel of grace,—as an introduction to the visible Church,—or as a renewal of the depraved nature?

Our own conclusion is, that *if the Fathers were right* in giving to the ordinance the signification it now bears, High Churchmen are the only persons who administer it properly. But if they were wrong in so exalting the symbol as to hide the true intent of the act, the duty of the Church clearly is to bear witness against the perversion. And we think it will do so best, by abandoning metaphysical discussions as to what baptism *does*: whether, for instance, it introduces to the Evangelical Covenant; *or*, as a federal rite confirms

a previously existing title; *or*, as an *opus operatum*, becomes the medium of a moral and spiritual change, so great as to warrant at least *the hope* of regeneration; *or*, whether the grace it secures is "prevenient," or subsequent,—a gift, or a germ only; *or*, finally, whether, "like a potent drug or chemical antidote, it infallibly disperses the poison inherited from Adam," and so, when performed in the appointed order, entitles the recipient to all the blessings of eternal life. We say the Church will protest most effectually, by abandoning all these discussions, and instead thereof calling upon men to reconsider the entire subject in the light of Scripture, with the hope,—surely not a vain one,—of at length ascertaining, with something like unanimity of conviction, what, in this matter, God would really have us to do.

We honour, as most appropriate, and most blessed, the religious services we connect with the union of Christians in marriage; but we refuse to agree with the Romish Church in exalting any such service into a Sacrament. Why can we not, with equal simplicity of purpose, dedicate our children to God, asking for them the prayers and the watchful care of the Church, without confusing ourselves either with false analogies about circumcision, or metaphysical speculations about a regeneration, the character of which can never be made intelligible to ordinary minds? Why should we shrink from saying that the Fathers erred when they converted this simple rite into a Sacrament, or forbear to inquire whether or no it was intended to be permanent?

That the ordinance of the Lord's Supper was to be *perpetuated* in the Church, and that it belonged *to Christians as such*, is evident from the fact that the great Apostle of the Gentiles had a special revelation regarding it, and

instructions given him to say to all believers, "Do this, *till I come*." He had no such message in relation to Baptism. Yet, in human judgment, there would have seemed to be as much need for the one as for the other, if *both* were intended to be of obligation in the Christian Church, and both alike applicable to persons already within its pale.

"It may be asked," says Mr. Isaac Taylor, "by some, 'Why may we not have a religion of Sacraments,—of Church mysteries, and Church power,—and yet, at the same time, *give due prominence to the spiritual and moral realities of the Gospel?* Why may we not keep the spiritual and the ritual fairly abreast one of the other?' "

This is, unquestionably, the experiment which many are making in the present day. It has been made in every age of the Church, by men in whom the outer form has not destroyed the inner and deeper life of the spirit. But always in vain. And for several reasons,—

(1.) It is an *unwarranted* experiment, inasmuch as the ritual and the spiritual are not alike sanctioned in Scripture. Were it otherwise; did the question really relate merely to the *supposed consequences* of a revealed truth, it would be a very proper one; for we have no right to distrust the practical working of *anything* that God has commanded. But there is no such clear revelation on this subject, and therefore the experiment is not likely to succeed.

(2.) "The original constitution of the human mind forbids the attempt so to hold elements in equipoise, *the very nature of which* is not to occupy one and the same level; for the actual condition of human nature (always perversely disposed to substitute the ritual for the spiritual in religion) renders any such attempt to place the two *evenly* before the

mind, or otherwise than as the Scripture places them, in the last degree unwise, nay, mischievous.

(3.) "God *forbids* the endeavour, because it brings His truth upon the very same stage which all false religions have occupied." *

There is nothing left for us, therefore, if we would protest effectually, but to go back to the practice of the Apostolic age.

We would only add, that our own judgment in relation to the non-perpetuity of Baptism in the Christian Church has been greatly confirmed by observing that the views of each party, in the controversy between Baptists and Pædobaptists, *rest merely on inference*, neither being able to furnish a single scriptural example in point. We say, *in point*, because the case of the three thousand at Pentecost, —of Cornelius,—of the jailer, or of the Ethiopian eunuch, are not so; all these being instances of baptism on conversion, either from Judaism or heathenism. What we want is, an instance of the baptism, *either as child or adult*, of any person born of Christian parents. As the Sacred Records stretch through two generations, during which *thousands* of children must have been born and brought up in Christianity, it is, to say the least of it, singular, on the supposition that the rite was, *in their case*, essential to membership, and introductory to the Communion of the Lord's Supper, that not a single reference to its administration, either to child or adult, under the conditions referred to, is to be found in the New Testament. E.

* Ancient Christianity, vol. i., pp. 247-8.

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints—as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine.*

BRITISH MUSEUM

SALVATION.

THE word "Salvation" occurs in the Old Testament in *three* distinct senses.

First,—It is put for signal deliverances wrought by *human* agency, *e. g.*, "Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great *salvation* in Israel?" (1 Sam. xiv. 45). *Men* are, in this sense, frequently called "saviours" (Judg. iii. 9—15; Obad. ver. 21).

[Registered for transmission abroad.]

Secondly,—It is used to indicate *Divine* protection and blessing. God is spoken of as a "rock" of *salvation*, a "shield," and a "horn" (2 Sam. xxii. 3), and special manifestations of His providence are emphatically called "His *salvation*" (Exod. xiv. 13; 1 Chron. xvi. 23—35; Psa. xxvii. 1). In this sense, too, Jehovah is said to be "the *saviour*" of Israel (Isa. xlv. 15; Hos. xiii. 4).

Thirdly,—It is employed to describe *a state of mind*, —consciousness of peace with God, and deliverance from the dominant power of evil; *e. g.*, "Let Thy priests, O God, be *clothed with salvation*, and let Thy saints rejoice in goodness" (2 Chron. vi. 41); and again, "He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness" (Isa. lxi. 10). "Salvation," in this sense, was joy and peace to its possessor. So David prays, after his sad fall, "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation" (Psa. li. 12); by which he means, "Give me again the sweet consciousness of forgiven sin."

Prophetically, the *everlasting blessedness* of Israel (whatever that state might signify to the Jew) is called her "*salvation*" (Isa. xlv. 17; xlvi. 13; lii. 7). We say, *whatever* that state might signify to the Jew; but we have no doubt as to what it *did* signify to him. We believe that, to the ancient Israelite, it always and *rightly* meant, *the exaltation of Abraham's seed under the Messiah, after the resurrection* (Isa. xxv. 6—8; xxvi. 19; xlv. 17—23; comp. with Rom. xiv. 11; Ezek. xxxvii. 1—14; xvi. 53—63).

It is in this sense that the coming King is emphatically termed by Isaiah "*a Saviour*, and a great one" (xix. 20), and is spoken of by the same prophet (xlix. 8) as given "in a day of salvation,"—to "establish (raise p, *marg.*) the earth," to cause "to inherit the desolate heritages,"—to "say to the prisoners (in the grave), Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves" (xlix. 9),—to cause the chosen people to enter upon a period when "they shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for He that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall He guide them" (xlix. 10; comp. with Rev. vii. 16).

"Salvation," as it is now generally understood, in the sense of *deliverance from hell*, is a term unknown to the Old Testament. Such passages as, "Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell" (Psa. lxxxvi. 13), or, "Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and deliver his soul from hell" (Prov. xxiii. 14), refer only to the grave, and are usually so translated in the margin.

That the ancient Jews believed in *future punishment* is clear enough. The amount of light they had on this subject may be gathered from the various Scriptures which speak of sinners as "silent in darkness" (1 Sam. ii. 9); as "reserved to the day of destruction" (Job xxi. 30); as persons whose "name" shall, by God, be "put out for ever and ever" (Psa. ix. 5); *on whom* He will "rain burning coals, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest" (xi. 6); who

"shall not inhabit the earth" (Prov. x. 30); who shall be slain by "the breath of the lips" of Messiah (Isa. xi. 4); who shall be made as "ashes under the soles of the feet" of the righteous (Mal. iv. 3); and whose "carcases" (dead corpses) shall be for an enduring memorial of God's judgment on them, for "their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring to all flesh" (Isa. lxvi. 24). From these passages,—*and there are none of a contrary character*,—it is difficult to see how the Jew could gather more than that the wicked would rise again, and, at the judgment, be subjected to the punishments thus threatened.

What classes of persons were by the Jews included under the term "wicked," it is not difficult to gather. Primarily, and *as a rule*, the idolatrous enemies of Israel,—their seducers and oppressors,—constituted the great body of transgressors; *exceptionally*, apostate Jews,—men of violence and blood, flagrant opposers of God and goodness, were comprehended; but there is nothing whatever to indicate even a suspicion, on the part either of priest or prophet, that mankind *as a race*, in consequence of Adam's fall, were orn under a liability to eternal misery after death,—that all alike were, *by nature*, involved in this one great and common condemnation. Explain the fact as we may, it cannot be denied that the doctrine of the *liability* of all mankind, *in consequence of the fall*, to eternal misery, if revealed at all in Scripture, can be found only in that later revelation, the advent of

which was announced to the wondering shepherds as "good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people" (Luke ii. 10).

Nothing can be plainer than that the Jew looked at the condition of the race from a stand-point differing in many respects from our own. It never seems to have occurred to him that man, *as man*, was under condemnation; that the original threatening, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," meant *more* than God declared it to mean when He said to Adam, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. iii. 17—19); or that a Jewish babe was *born* "under wrath," and, until regenerated, regarded as a child of the devil. Explain this state of things, we repeat, as we may, we are forced to conclude that, if man did really *then* enter upon existence in the condition supposed, the Antediluvian, the Patriarch, and the Israelite, were alike ignorant of the fact.

That the distinctions which exist *now*, between the spiritual and unspiritual, the merely moral and the truly devout, the men of form and ritual, and the men whose purged eye pierced through these outer coverings into the invisible and eternal, existed among the Jews, cannot be doubted. Such men knew, as well as we do, that they were fallen and depraved,

that they had natures prone to sin and averse to holiness, and that God therefore required "a new heart and a right spirit" (Ezek. xi. 19; xviii. 31); but, as we have said before, this necessity is, in the OLD TESTAMENT, never spoken of as attaching to man, *as man*, in consequence of Adam's sin; is never regarded as existing apart from *personal* transgression, or ever supposed to be essential to salvation.

Whether rightly or wrongly, we say not; but most assuredly the Jews *believed* that, whatever might become of other nations, "Israel" would be "saved." Individually, they were quite aware that the birthright might be cast away, that God might be rejected, and His favour lost by apostacy; but, *as a nation*, they always regarded themselves, and were regarded by the prophets, even in the midst of their backslidings, as a chosen people (Rom. xi. 26).

In the NEW TESTAMENT, the word "salvation" first meets us in the announcement of the angel that the holy child shall be called Jesus (*i. e.*, Saviour), because He shall save his people *from their sins* (Matt. i. 21). Peter, addressing the Israelites, says, "Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, *in turning away every one of you from his iniquities*" (Acts iii. 26); and Paul but teaches the same doctrine to the Gentiles when he tells them that "the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. i. 16); that they must "work out" their "salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. ii. 12); that salvation is "a helmet" for daily use in the

warfare of time; and that the "wise" are they who *live* it (Ephes. v. 15; vi. 17). Nothing can be clearer than that *the primary and principal idea* of salvation in the New Testament is deliverance from the *bondage* of evil, emancipation from the "*captivity*" of Satan.

But this is not the only sense in which it is used,—for St. Paul, writing to the Romans regarding Christ, says, "Being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved *from wrath* through Him (Rom. v. 9); and again to the Thessalonians,—"Jesus, which delivered us from *the wrath* to come" (1 Thess. i. 10); and again, "God hath not appointed us *to wrath*, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him (1 Thess. v. 9, 10).

In all these cases, the wrath referred to is that which shall fall upon the enemies of Messiah when He comes in triumph, makes "known His salvation," "openly shows His righteousness in the sight of the heathen" (Psa. xcviii. 2), bares "His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations," and causes "all the ends of the earth" to "see the salvation of our God" (Isa. lii. 10; Luke iii. 6).

With these *two* ideas clearly before us,—that salvation is *primarily* deliverance from the bondage of sin and Satan, and *secondarily*, as a consequence, deliverance from wrath,—we need not be perplexed if we find this same word "salvation" often put for something *far higher*, even for a present *union with Christ;* involving freedom from *the love* of sin—the partaking

of a "Divine nature,"—being "born again,"—"created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephes. ii. 10).

It was in this higher sense that "salvation" was said by our Lord to be "*of the Jews*" (John iv. 22), since then, as now, and apart altogether from Judaism, "in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him" (Acts x. 35). Hence Peter is sent to tell Cornelius "words whereby he and all his house should be saved" (xi. 14), although *before he heard those words* the Lord himself had said to him, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God" (x. 4). Hence, too, Zaccheus, a man evidently accepted beforehand on account of his works (Luke xix. 8), has salvation "brought to his house" by that blessed Redeemer who "came to seek and to save that which was lost" (ver. 9, 10). It is in this higher sense alone that salvation comes to the Gentile *through the fall of the Jew* (Rom. xi. 11); that some are "from the beginning *chosen* to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2 Thess. ii. 13); and that for others there is "a day" (or period) in which, as "in a time accepted," they may gain or lose the precious boon. And so it is recorded on one occasion, that "as many as were ordained (set in order) to eternal life believed" (Acts xiii. 48); and on another, that "the Lord added to the Church daily *such as should be saved*" (Acts ii. 47). In all these cases the salvation spoken of is *much more*

than deliverance from wrath, much more than emancipation from the captivity of Satan; it is admission to fellowship with the Redeemer, it is the earnest and pledge of a full and final victory over all evil.

Greatly, therefore, as some may be stumbled at being told that salvation is represented in Scripture as *a thing of degree*, involving more or less according to circumstances, we fearlessly affirm it to be true. Scripture does indeed teach that to be "*in Christ*" involves a title to every form of spiritual blessing, whether for time or eternity; but it does not teach that every man not thus united to the Saviour is abandoned to Satan, or that he who fails to become *in the highest sense* a child of God, is by necessary consequence a child of the devil. Not so easily does the Father in heaven let His feeble and erring ones go. For men are *His* children in *two* senses—by birth, and by adoption; they can be the devil's only in one,—by giving themselves up to his power and service, and by a voluntary and wicked rejection of the offered love of the Redeemer.

If salvation be not a thing of degree, what does St. Paul mean when he speaks of it as especially sent to God-fearing men,—"Whosoever among you *feareth God*, to you is the word of this salvation sent" (Acts xiii. 26)? when, writing to "saints"—saved men—he says, "Whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and *salvation*" (2 Cor. i. 6)? when he tells the Philippians that the contradictions he experienced should turn to his "*salvation*" through their prayer,

and "the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ" (i. 19)? when he bids Timothy "take heed" unto himself, and to "the doctrine" he teaches, since "in so doing" he should "both *save* himself and them that heard him" (1 Tim. iv. 16)? when in one place he affirms it to be certain that "all Israel shall be *saved*" (Rom. xi. 26), and, in another, labours "if by any means he might *save* some of them" (xi. 14)?

In what other sense than in that of *a present and higher* salvation, as distinguished from *a future and lower one*, is it possible to conceive of the loving Saviour saying, "Unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them" (Mark iv. 12)? Does any reasonable being, with the fear of God before his eyes, dare to say that words like these, whether found in the Prophets or on the lips of the Lord himself, mean more than that the parties here referred to were not *then* capable of profiting by the instruction He imparted,—that they were not fit to be numbered among His chosen disciples,—that their reception of His teaching *at that time* would only lead to its misapprehension and abuse? Does any one imagine that the Redeemer meant it to be supposed that He abandoned the multitude to Satan for ever?

The conclusion may be a startling one, but it cannot be escaped,—Grace, in one form or other, *must* extend beyond this dispensation; Mercy must be future as

well as present; Forgiveness must be *possible*, not only in this world, but in the world to come; Pardon and Union to Christ cannot be identical; Salvation is a thing of degree.

And now we come to understand why it is that salvation is spoken of in Scripture as accomplished through so many agencies; that belief in Christ's power to heal *saved* when He was on earth (Luke vii. 50); that baptism once *saved* (1 Pet. iii. 21); that hope *saves* (Rom. viii. 24); that memory *saves* (1 Cor. xv. 2); that the Word *saves* (Jas. i. 21); that the love of the truth *saves* (2 Thess. ii. 10); that Preaching *saves* (1 Cor. i. 21); that grace *saves* (Ephes. ii. 5, 8); that endurance to the end *saves* (Matt. xxiv. 13); that calling on the name of the Lord *saves* (Acts ii. 21); that coming to Christ *saves* (John x. 9); that His life *saves* (Rom. v. 10); that His death *saves* (Col. i. 22); that faith *saves* (Acts xvi. 31); that belief in the resurrection *saves* (Rom. x. 9); that the knowledge of Scripture *saves* (2 Tim. iii. 15); that Christ is Himself "*salvation*" (Luke ii. 30; Acts iv. 12); and that real Christians, while *saved already*, come at length to say, "Now is our *salvation* nearer than when we believed" (Rom. xiii. 11).

Hence, too, it is that "salvation," while a *present* blessing, is yet an "inheritance" (Heb. i. 14); *enjoyed now*, yet *to be received* by them that "look for the Saviour when He shall appear the second time without sin (a sin offering) unto salvation" (Heb. ix. 28); in one sense entered upon when faith is *first* exercised;

in another, the crown and completion of the Christian life.

It is in this latter sense, as an inheritance "reserved" for those "who are kept by the power of God," that "salvation" was so deep an object of interest to holy men of old. For *this*, the highest, the privilege of the elect and the gift of Christ, was the salvation "of which (or, regarding which) the prophets have (in all ages) inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace (the peculiar favour) that should come unto (the saints): searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us (of the Gentile dispensation) they did minister the things which are now reported by them (the inspired apostles) that preached the Gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into" (1 Pet. i. 10—12). A.

APOSTOLIC PREACHING.

INTRODUCTORY.

IN estimating the character of the *earliest* converts to the faith, and in connecting their moral and religious development with apostolic teaching, it is necessary to bear in mind that all parties alike,—the teachers, as well as the taught,—were Jews or proselytes, and, as such, generally well instructed in that great system of Divine truth which is embodied in the Old Testament. Bigoted, prejudiced, and in error as to the meaning of Jewish prophecy, most, if not all of them, prior to their conversion, had probably been; but they were, generally speaking, neither ignorant nor careless persons; they were earnest, serious, and sincere.

Further, these persons remained Jews, both nationally and religiously; they attended the services, and, for aught that appears to the contrary, continued to offer sacrifices in the temple (Acts ii. 46; xxi. 26); they frequented the synagogues (xvii. 1, 2); and they probably mingled with other Jews in all the intercourse of social life. They did so, except where violent prejudice rendered such intercourse impossible, and until persecution drove them away from their own land.

Apostolic preaching, therefore, *in Judea*, all but exclusively related to Christ,—to His character, His sacrificial work, and His kingly rule. These truths were taught in the fewest and simplest words possible,—*as facts for acceptance*, and not as doctrines to be disputed about. Hence, in all the sermons given us in the New Testament *to the Jews*,

there is a constant *pre-supposal* of a knowledge on their part of all that might be comprehended under the title of ordinary morality, of all the great truths inculcated in the Old Testament Scriptures; for these were the daily teachings of the synagogue.

Peter's first sermon affords an illustration strikingly in point. It consists of one idea. It opens with a declaration of Christ's character and credentials, "A man approved among you by miracles;" it then takes up, first, the fact of His *heavenly* mission,—all that had taken place having been pre-ordained, "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God;" then His resurrection from the dead, because "it was not possible that He should be holden of it;" then His ascension, "whereof we are witnesses;" then His exaltation, "at the right hand of God;" and, finally, in proof of all, the gift of the Holy Ghost,—"He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."

Suddenly and deeply convinced of the truth of what the Apostle had said, and therefore of their guilt in having either actively or passively promoted the crucifixion of Messiah, his hearers cry out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter's answer embodies the message of God to *all*, who, in whatever age of the world, in the same state of mind, put the same question,—"Repent" (of your past rejection of the Redeemer), "and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (that is, *openly* confess Him before men as the only Saviour), "and *ye shall receive* the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts ii. 39).

But it is mere perversity to maintain, as some do, that because the Apostles were thus exclusive in the subject of

their public ministrations, that therefore sermons addressed to Englishmen in the nineteenth century of the Christian era ought not to enforce in detail all the obligations of Christian morality. Never should it be forgotten, that to "preach Christ crucified" is to preach *all* that Christ taught; and that therefore he who is enforcing the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, is as really preaching Christ as he who makes the doctrine of justification by faith the sole topic of his discourse. Perhaps it is not too much to say that the most pressing necessity of *our times* is not so much the publication of a free salvation, as the convincing of believers, that in and through the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, *a present deliverance* from the dominion of evil is attainable; and that true dignity of life, nobility of character, accomplishment in "whatsoever is honourable and of good report," may be theirs, if they will submit themselves to Him who is willing, *if they will*, to fight both in and for them, and to give them "the victory which overcometh the world."

In endeavouring to ascertain the general character of Apostolic preaching, *whether to Jew or Gentile*, it will be necessary to take an extended view of all that can be found in Scripture relative thereto.

It will scarcely be doubted that the first and leading object, whether of Christ or His apostles, in dealing with men, was, *to convince them of sin*. Before any man can "repent" of sin, he must be conscious of having committed it; before any man can "believe the Gospel," or consider it to be good news at all, he must be sensible that it *supplies a want*,—that it offers him something which he practically and personally needs,—something which he could not otherwise obtain.

Now it is to make men conscious of need,—n other words, to *convince them of sin*, that Christ himself tells us He has sent His Holy Spirit into the world; and since "the Spirit and the Bride" have but one message to mankind,—since it is only as a co-worker with the Spirit that the Church, which is the Bride,- can hope to accomplish any good, the question becomes all important,—"How can Christians most effectually co-operate with that holy monitor?"

Scripture, looking on man in relation to a future state of existence, clearly recognizes three things: *first*, a Church *invisible*, and known only to God; *secondly*, as *inclusive* of this invisible body, a *visible congregation* of believers, consisting of all who *profess faith* in Christ; and, *thirdly*, a multitude,—embracing by far the greater part of mankind, —called "the world," who, whether heathen or nominally Christian, seem to be regarded merely as the great "field" (Matt. xiii. 38) *in which* truth is to be sown, and *out of which* the elect are to be gathered, and the visible Church increased and strengthened.

To each of these bodies of men the Spirit is represented as coming. To the first, as a Comforter and Purifier, "guiding" them by and through such purification "into all truth," as it is revealed to man in Holy Scripture (John xvi. 13); to the second, as a quickener, making them sensible of an "eternal life," on which they are bidden to "lay hold" (1 Tim. vi. 19), since it is a life which in relation to each of them has *here* to be won or lost; to the third, as a convincer "of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come" (John xvi. 8).

The *first*,—the Church "chosen from the foundation of the world" (Ephes. i. 4), and *known only to God*, is never

regarded as dependent, either for its existence or sustenance, on any human agency,—it lives, moves, and has its being in the Redeemer. The *second*,—the professing or visible Church, embracing, for the most part at least, the invisible in its bosom, is the main object of attention in Scripture,—we had almost said, the *one* and exclusive subject of Apostolic tears and prayers. The *third*,—the world at large, mysterious as it may seem to us, is apparently left all but unnoticed; the greater part of it shut out altogether from any knowledge of the truth, and the rest only partially enlightened by here and there a straggling ray.

Do not let us fear to look this great fact in the face, however hard it may be to understand it. It is impossible to deny that in relation to myriads of *immortal* men and women (for so they are always regarded by us), whether Heathen, Jew, Mohammedan, or nominally Christian, little is *positively and distinctly* revealed, beyond the fact that they will be judged according to the degree of light they have enjoyed; although, as we have already shown, *indications* are not wanting in numerous and important passages, that it is *eventually* the will of God, by and through the Elect Church, to make such persons, after the Resurrection, acquainted with the Saviour they have never known on earth.

L.

THE SACRAMENTS.

BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.

WE have already said that, in one form or other, *all* persons who hold to the perpetuity of water baptism, more or less *imply*, in their mode of administering it, something like a doctrine of regeneration. But this is, after all, a very different thing from the absolute assertion made in the "office" of the Church of England, that the child has been regenerated; and very different, too, from the declaration of the Presbyterians, that "baptism is a Sacrament of the New Testament, wherein Christ hath ordained the washing with water to be a *sign and seal* of ingrafting into Himself; of remission of sins by His blood, and regeneration by His spirit; of adoption, and resurrection unto everlasting life" ("Ass. Cat.," Q. 165, and answer).

All these forms of belief in baptismal grace go, of course, on the assumption that, in Scripture, baptism is represented as, in some form or other, a type, or sign, or seal of that mystical union of the baptized with the Redeemer, which, in the quotation we have just made, is expressed by the phrase of "ingrafting into Himself," and which, of course, carries with it all other spiritual blessings.

The question,—the only question worth examining,—is, "*Can this be shown from Scripture?*" If it can, all our previous reasonings on this subject are worthless: if it

cannot, baptismal regeneration, in all its modes and forms, is a miserable delusion.

We have already shown that the *original meaning* of the rite was neither more nor less than *the open and avowed committal* of the man who was baptized to all the consequences which might follow so public a declaration of the new faith he had professed. We now simply ask for evidence that in apostolic times it ever became anything else,—that it is *ever* spoken of in Scripture as involving that mystical union with the Redeemer on which all theories of baptismal grace rest.

If this can be shown, we are silenced in a moment; if it cannot,—if this, the essential point at issue, is to be assumed, the whole question is begged, and the supposed authority by which baptismal grace is sustained falls instantly to the ground.

In settling this preliminary point, it is scarcely necessary to say that such texts as "He that believeth *and is baptized* shall be saved" (Mark xvi. 16); or, "Except a man be born *of water* and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii. 5); or, "Go ye and make disciples of all nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. xxviii. 19); or, "Repent, and *be baptized* every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts ii. 38); do not help us. They unquestionably prove that baptism, *whatever it might mean*, was then an essential rite, but they do not furnish us with the least reason for believing that baptism was *more* or *other* than we have already maintained it to be.

The baptism of the Israelite "to Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor. x. 2), in like manner has no bearing on

the question of spiritual "ingrafting;" for no one pretends that the Israelites were mystically united to Moses, in any sense corresponding to that which unites the believer to Christ. The act of faith, under the influence of which they entered the Red Sea, trusting in God and His servant, was *their* baptism, only in the sense that it was the open avowal of their confidence in him whom they followed into the deep.

Circumcision, also,—so often assumed to foreshadow baptism,—whether regarded only as of the flesh or as "of the heart," was clearly the professed dedication of life, and all its issues, to Jehovah, in reliance on the covenant God had made with their forefathers; not the slightest indication can be found that it was ever supposed to imply anything beyond this.

Again, on the supposition that baptism was, what we believe it to have been, neither more nor less than the open profession of faith in the Redeemer, nothing can be more natural than the appeal that St. Paul makes to the Romans, to remember that in this act they had "put on Christ," —been "baptized into His death," been "buried with Him," and "risen with Him into newness of life;" that their one baptism was the symbol of their unity; that what this rite was outwardly, the Word was inwardly in the process of a believer's sanctification" (Rom. vi. 1—4; Col. ii. 12; Ephes. v. 26); but the whole seems to us to become unmeaning if it be regarded as an exhortation to persons who, having been baptized in infancy, had never *consciously* "put on Christ" at all.

Further,—the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of baptism as one of the first principles or elements of the doctrine of Christ, which he says ought to be *left*,

in order to go on to perfection (Heb. vi. 1, 2). Is it probable that he would have thus written respecting a rite which implied the ingrafting of the soul into Christ,—a foundation which obviously could never be "laid again"? If baptism be regarded simply as a public profession of faith, his language becomes plain.

But if these passages be put aside, what else is there on which the doctrine of a mystical union of the soul with Christ in baptism can be based? Plainly, nothing at all.

Then as to THE FACT. *What evidence* is there that the nature of *any* child is, or ever was, changed in baptism? The evidence of the corruption inherited from the first Adam is obvious enough, for each one of the human race exhibits but too early the traces of moral evil in his nature and dispositions. But where is the evidence that the nature of the second Adam is imparted in baptism? Can it be maintained for a moment that, *prior* to evil influences acting upon it, a baptized child is, in any respect, actually less depraved than an unbaptized one? or must the change, if such it be, rather be compared

> "To snow, that falls upon the river,
> A moment white, then lost for ever"?

The answer to this reasoning is as mystical as the original assertion. It is maintained * that a *sacramental* element is needful to show that Christ, *in His glorified human nature*, is our second Adam; and that the baptismal water indicates the salvation, not of the soul only, but of *body*, soul, and spirit. "Christ's nature," it is said, "was so constituted (after His resurrection, at least) that it could be *imparted* (1 Cor. xv. 4, 5); that, as Adam imparted not instruction, but *a nature* to those that sprung from him," so Christ

* See Sadler on "The Second Adam and the New Birth."

(the second Adam) had *a body* that became *life-diffusing*;" that as, in and through Adam, we receive, in unconscious infancy, and apart from any act of our own, a depraved nature, so Christ also, without any act of ours, in unconscious infancy, imparts, *through baptism*, a new nature; that he who is "born of water" is therefore and invariably "born of the Spirit;" and that "no other moment can be imagined when this takes place, except at the time of our initiation into the Church of Christ by baptism."

Now all this is certainly very ingenious, and if it were given *in explanation* of any clear and positive declaration of Scripture that, in baptism, this "ingrafting" *did* actually take place, it might be accepted for what it is worth. But when we recollect that it is from first to last unsustained even by any plausible interpretation of Scripture,—when we find that it is, in fact, nothing more than the application of the late Archdeacon Wilberforce's treatise on the "Incarnation" to baptism, we put it aside as absolutely worthless.

For, *first*, it goes on the assumption that God imparts *spiritual* blessings by and through a material medium, than which nothing can be more contrary to fact. *Secondly*, it assumes that there is a work of the Spirit which, unlike every other, cannot be tested by its "fruits," since it is readily admitted that, so far as man can judge, no difference whatever is *perceptible*, either in infancy or in later life, between a baptized person and one unbaptized. *Thirdly* (which again is quite contrary to the whole tenour of Scripture), it asserts that salvation is made to hang on the performance of an outward rite, of which the recipient is unconscious.

Do not let us be mistaken here. We do not say that

the benefits of Christ's work are confined to those who repent and believe the Gospel, for infants unconsciously share in that benefit.

> "They die, for Adam sinned;
> They live, for Jesus died;"

but not a syllable can be found in Scripture which connects that benefit with water baptism.

"If," says Mr. Sadler, "the children of Christians were (in Apostolic times) debarred from baptism when unconscious infants, and seeing they must be admitted into the Church at some time, we should have expected some regulations respecting the age and the amount of consciousness of Christian truth that was indispensable before they could be baptized. Some such injunction would be quite as needful as that respecting the admission of widows to Church alms."

We reply,—On the supposition that baptism was the only appointed mode of admission to the Church, not merely for converts from heathenism, but for persons born and brought up in Christianity, the reasonableness of the remark must be admitted; but then we add,—Is it not stranger still that not a single instance of *such* baptism is on record at all; that not a word is said about the application of the rite under such circumstances at any age; that St. Paul, who had from God a special revelation regarding the Lord's Supper, had no message whatever in relation to baptism; and finally, that in writing to the Corinthians respecting the position of the infant children of converts, he should have said, "*now* are they holy," not *through* baptism, but *by* birth? (See Stanley on 1 Cor. vii. 14.)

We are not among those who account evangelical Church-

men *false or dishonest* because they one day use offices which assert baptismal regeneration, and the next preach sermons to prove that unless men be converted they cannot enter the kingdom of God; we need not therefore accompany Mr. Sadler in his attempt to show from Scripture that these apparently conflicting views are perfectly reconcileable; and that the doctrine of baptismal regeneration is in perfect harmony "with the most unreserved preaching of conversion or renewal;" but we do certainly start when he tells us that on this point the Scriptures are more explicit than the Prayer Book,—that the whole subject should be treated as a Bible rather than as a Church question, and that baptism, "no matter *what the state of heart of the recipient*," at once "brings the baptized into contact with the highest powers of the unseen world," and that in some infinitely mysterious way the human graft there and then comes in contact with the new stock of humanity—the second Adam.

That in all this Mr. Sadler but treads in the steps of Augustine, Luther, Melancthon, the English Reformers, Hooker, Jeremy Taylor, Beveridge, Simeon, and others, we cannot dispute; but all this amounts to nothing at all, if we are right in believing that the doctrine in question is altogether unsanctioned by Holy Scripture. E.

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[*All Communications for the Editor should be addressed to* No. 14, Bartholomew Close, Aldersgate Street, London, E.C.]

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints—as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine*.

SALVATION.

(SECOND PAPER.)

WE are by no means unaware that the course of inquiry we are pursuing will be very distasteful to that large class of *dubious* Christians who,—to use a phrase of their own—never do more than indulge *the hope* of being eventually saved, and yet are, nevertheless, marvellously satisfied with their spiritual condition.

G

[Registered for transmission abroad.]

Accustomed, as such persons have always been, to regard "salvation" only in one light, viz., as complete deliverance from evil and sorrow *after death*, anything which seems to indicate the possibility of the future state involving trial is to *them* intolerable.

Impatient under the discipline of this life, irritated rather than improved by its cares, people of this class cling only the more closely to the conviction that, if "saved" from hell, they *must*, in the world to come, be *perfectly happy;* have done for ever with the vexations and contradictions which have tormented them in this mortal state, and find no further occasion for the exercise of a forbearance, the practice of which has been so difficult and disagreeable while here. It never seems to occur to them *as possible* that those who leave the earth meek and chastened, loving and truthful, may, perchance, carry with them, even into paradise, the elements of their joy; or that others, by the same law of continuance, may bear in their own bosoms, seeds of sorrow capable of development even in a world of bliss. How *can* it be so, they say, since "saints" are by grace alone made "heirs" of heaven, and "sinners" altogether excluded from joy or hope? Beyond this awful alternative, Scripture, they imagine, reveals absolutely nothing.

Not such, however, so far as we have yet been able to discover, is the teaching of the Bible. If it were so, our only duty would be silence. But believing, as we do, that such is not the case,—that *some* portions of revelation, at least, are intended to lead us to a

very different conclusion, and that while Scripture distinctly reveals a salvation of the highest kind for the few, it intimates also a salvation of a much lower kind for the many, we venture to pursue our search *for the whole truth*, without fear or hesitation.

The entire question is simply one of Divine testimony, and its only importance is that which it derives from its bearing on the revealed character of God; on the extent and efficiency of the work of Christ; and on the promotion of holiness among those who believe themselves to be emphatically His children.

The ground over which we have to pass is one that has been little trodden. Whether "Redemption" be general or particular—whether Christ, properly speaking, died for the Church only, or for the world also, is a point which has long divided theologians; but all parties appear to have agreed that, whatever be the right way of viewing *this* question, redemption can only become practically available to any child of Adam by the exercise *here* of a personal faith, wrought by and through the Holy Spirit.

That the salvation, whether of the individual or of the race, is of grace alone, we should be the last to dispute; but we are not quite so ready to accept the logical consequence, necessary as it may seem to be, that the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus can have no efficacy apart from the present and personal faith of the sinner; or, which is the same thing, that the redemption of mankind by Christ becomes *a reality* only in so far as the truths of revelation are applied by the Holy Spirit

to the hearts of individuals. We see, indeed, abundant reasons in Scripture for believing that a man may *reject* the salvation thus wrought out for him; that he may count himself "unworthy of eternal life," and so perish in his pride; but we can discover none in support of the notion that the great sacrifice, after all, only *rendered it possible* for men to be saved in connection with their faith in it while on earth; or that if no man in Judea had believed in Christ, the only result of His boundless love would have been the deeper condemnation of us all.

That there *is* a salvation which is *only by faith* we readily admit; for in no other way can any man attain to that vital union with the Redeemer, which is life eternal; but that where this great and vital change is not effected, nothing which can be of any avail to the sinner is accomplished, we as strenuously deny; for the world is given to Christ, and not to Satan; and the redemption which suffices, "through the forbearance of God," for "sins that are past"—the sins of those who lived before the incarnation, and, therefore, never knew the Lord, suffices also, through the same forbearance, for sins committed by men to whom the Gospel has never been preached, or by whom it has been so imperfectly understood, that it cannot truthfully be said either to have been intelligently received, or consciously rejected. "If I had not come and *spoken* unto them," says our Lord of the Jews, "they had not had sin;" and again, "If I had not done among them *the works* which none other man did, they

had not had sin"—*i. e.*, they had not incurred the sin involved in my rejection. How, then, can *they* have incurred it, who have never heard His name, or heard it only in connection with idolatrous superstition, and without any spiritual apprehension of its power and beauty? Yet strange indeed would be the conclusion, that there is, therefore, no difference, either in this world or in the world to come, between the man who is *now* one with Christ, and the man who *here* remains ignorant or negligent of His great salvation.

That there are *degrees of happiness* in the future world few will be inclined to deny. Passages which refer, on the one hand, to a salvation "so as by fire" (1 Cor. iii. 15), and on the other to an "entrance ministered abundantly into the everlasting kingdom" (2 Pet. i. 11), forbid even doubt as to whether or no *all* redeemed persons in the world to come will be alike honoured or honourable. Further, it is generally admitted that, at the coming of Christ,—in whatever sense the second advent is to be understood,—even among those who "wait for His appearing," *some* will "be found of Him in peace without spot, and blameless," while others will be "ashamed before Him at His coming" (2 Pet. iii. 14; 1 John ii. 28). Nay, more (neglected as such truths commonly are), few, probably, would be found absolutely to assert that a "prize" (1 Cor. ix. 24; Phil. iii. 14) and a "gift" (Rom. vi. 23) imply, *in all respects*, the same thing; that a "crown," which some obtain, and others lose (Rev. iii. 11), is not a special distinction, or that it is

impossible to be "beguiled" of our "reward" (Col. ii. 18).*

But these admissions, much as they involve, practically amount to little or nothing, since they are all but universally stript of power by the unintelligible nonsense made of them in what is usually termed "sound" interpretation, according to which, the diversities referred to, all end in every individual being *as happy as he can be;* each vessel, it is said, whatever be its capacity, will then be full of joy and glory,—the only difference being, that one will be able to *contain* more than another. The slightest reflection, one would think, would be sufficient to show that this is really *explaining away* the entire doctrine; for what can any man desire more than to be *as happy* as his nature and capacity will admit of.

The point at issue is simply this,—Will the Elect Church, the Bride of Christ, occupy, in the world (or age) to come, any position materially differing from that of other "saved" persons? Is there, from the testimony of Scripture, any reason to suppose that, without and beyond the pale of the Church, properly so termed, others will be found, tributary to its glory, but not partakers of its dignity and splendour?

Something of this kind would surely seem to be *indicated* in the forty-fifth Psalm, where, in prophetic symbols descriptive of Messiah's glory, the Church,

* The best sermon that we are acquainted with on this subject is one by the Rev. Thos. Binney, found in a small volume entitled, "Tower Church Sermons."

under the name of the king's daughter, is described as "all glorious within,—her clothing of wrought gold;" while the daughter of Tyre (heathen) is *there "with a gift."* Something of the kind is surely *asserted* in the Apocalypse, where the Church is described under the figure of a glorious city, of which "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb" are "the temple," and *into which*, "saved" nations outside do bring "their glory and honour" (Rev. xxi. 24).

The same truth is probably taught in the parable of the ten virgins, five of whom were foolish and unwatchful, and, therefore, shut out from the marriage banquet. For there is nothing to show that these women were intended to represent the lost. On the contrary, they are recognized as expectants of the Bridegroom, and go out to meet him; but since they are negligent attendants, they suffer exclusion from the post of honour.

Again, is nothing to be learned from the distinction drawn in Scripture between persons "taken captive by the devil at his will" (2 Tim. ii. 26), and those who voluntarily choose his service? St. Paul, we think, recognizes a difference between these two classes, when, speaking either of himself or of another, as the case may be, he describes the condition of the man who is brought "into captivity to the law of sin" (Rom. vii. 23), or, as he expresses it elsewhere, who is "sold under sin" (ver. 14). That he means by this something very different from voluntary servitude is clear from what follows,—"That which I do I

allow not: for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that do I. To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." Who can doubt that this state, —in the Apostle's case temporary,—is the *permanent* condition of multitudes, who never get beyond it, but live and die in this wretched bondage?

Further,—the Lord, through His own death, is said "to deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. ii. 15). This text is generally supposed to intimate, that by faith in Christ timid believers are freed from the fear of physical death. But this is not its meaning, for the words are obviously connected with the ninth verse, in which the Saviour is spoken of as tasting "death for every man," and with the fourteenth verse, where the Redeemer is represented as, "through death," destroying "him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." It must, therefore, in some form or other, apply to *all men*. The true meaning, probably, is that Christ, "by the favour of God," suffered for "every man" (ver. 9), in order that "He might subdue him who has a deadly power—that is, the devil—and free those who, through fear of *condemnation*" (death being here used as including its consequences) "had during their whole lives been subject to bondage."—(*Stuart.*) The phrase, "power of death," or deadly power of the devil (Heb. ii. 14), is probably parallel to "works of the devil" (1 John iii. 8); and both imply that Christ's death

delivers the race from "the curse of the law," that "the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles," (Gal. iii. 13, 14).

But *what is* the blessing of Abraham? Clearly the restoration of his race at the resurrection. And this is the blessing which the Gentiles also are to enjoy. For "the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Gal. iii. 8). There is nothing to show that *all nations* would, by the exercise here of a living faith, be spiritually united to the Redeemer. The teaching is that by faith in Christ alone, as opposed to works of law, could they be saved; and that "the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe" (Gal. iii. 22). But since myriads who lived *before* the Incarnation are, "through the forbearance of God," saved by a Redeemer whom on earth they never knew, so, in virtue of the like forbearance, myriads who have subsequently lived on earth under similar circumstances, will be saved too, not, indeed, without faith, but *by a faith* exercised in other states of existence,—saved *in that lower sense*, which implies deliverance from the captivity of Satan, but not that higher and closer communion with Christ which belongs to those who love and trust Him here, and, by His grace, "endure unto the end."

Viewed by the light thus thrown upon the Divine procedure, other passages of Scripture, which often

perplex us, become clear,—such as those which speak of *the forgiveness of sins.* "Thy sins are forgiven thee," is a declaration frequently made by the Saviour, and apparently quite apart from a consideration of the previous character of those to whom the words were spoken. Sometimes it is made in connection with bodily healing, and then it is under but one requirement — faith in the Saviour's ability and willingness to grant the required boon. "Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto Him, Yea, Lord. Then touched He their eyes, saying, *According to your faith* be it unto you. And their eyes were opened" (Matt. ix. 28).

Now without going here into the question, as to what this forgiveness comprehended,—whether it implied, as we think probable, only the forgiveness of the particular sin for which the disease, thus miraculously removed, had been under that peculiar economy inflicted, in which case the phrase was simply an equivalent for "Arise, and walk;" or whether, as in the case of the woman "who was a sinner" (Luke vii. 37—50), it involved the pardon of sin generally, it is surely safe to affirm that it did not, *in all cases and necessarily,* imply spiritual communion with the Redeemer. In the case of the sick, it was a low, not a high, salvation; for it healed the body without necessarily purifying the heart.

Nor are these the only cases in which the forgiveness of sin is separated from oneness with Christ. "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father

will also forgive your trespasses," is a direct assertion from the lips of one who cannot deceive; and yet, who will say that a forgiving spirit is the only requisite for union to Christ? To be *forgiven* a sin is one thing; to be so completely delivered from its power, that we shall altogether abstain from it, is another; to know that we shall be *pardoned* for Christ's sake is a mercy truly; but infinitely greater is the blessing which reveals to us the place we shall occupy "among them that are sanctified" (Acts xxvi. 18).

Further, *forgiveness may be retracted.* At least, so the parable of the unforgiving servant (Matt. xviii. 34) is usually understood to teach. But oneness with Christ, once enjoyed, can never be lost. God forbid that we should think lightly of the forgiveness of sins by Christ in any sense; yet what renewed man does not *feel* the difference,—however difficult it may be for him to expound it,—between the words addressed to the palsied sufferer, "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee" (Luke v. 20), and the call so soon after made to Levi, the publican, "Follow me; and he left all, and rose up, and followed Him?" In the one case there is a declaration of pardon; in the other, an invitation to communion. To the former, the gift is *bodily health;* to the latter, *the honour of service.* To forgive sins (whatever the term may mean) was, as our Lord Himself tells us, equivalent to saying, "Arise, and walk;" it was a boon capable of being conferred by mortal man; for whomsoever the Apostles forgave on earth were to be forgiven in heaven. But who

imagines that the twelve could forgive sin in any sense which implies a change of heart? Who does not know that they possessed no power to ensure even their own continued union with the Master? "Rejoice not that the devils are subject unto you, but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven." "Because I live, ye shall live also." *These* are the treasures of grace, and it is to these, and not to mere forgiveness, that the disciples are always directed to look.

The conclusion we draw from the whole is, that the pardon of the sinner, and the glorification of the saint, are two distinct things, and ought never to be confounded; that the work of Christ and of His Gospel on earth is two-fold—*first*, to call out His Bride, His Elect Church, the kings, the priests, the office-bearers of the age to come; and *secondly*, to destroy the works of the devil by forgiving sins, by delivering captives, and by preparing mankind at large for higher and nobler revelations hereafter; and that in the age to come, Christ Himself will rule and teach by and through those whom He has *here*, for that special end, taught and trained. Then will it be seen that the falsehoods of Romanism, on the one hand, and the delusions of Infidelity, on the other, have been but mocking shadows of the true; that the Lord is at once a priest upon a throne, and the social regenerator of the race; that while, on the one hand, as King and Judge, He executes vengeance on His enemies, He is *still*,—His nature being unchangeable,—"kind even to the unthankful and to the evil" (Luke vi. 35).

A.

APOSTOLIC PREACHING.

(SECOND PAPER.)

WE have said that *indications* are not wanting, in numerous and important passages of Scripture, that it is *eventually* the will of God, by and through the elect Church, to make the heathen and others, after the resurrection, acquainted with the Saviour they have never known on earth.

Whether this be so or not, nothing can be clearer than that, for the last eighteen hundred years, generations after generations of mankind, apart from any fault of their own, have been altogether untouched by the Gospel; and nothing is more singular,—on the supposition of their being eternally lost,—than the fact that it is impossible to discover any such intimation in Scripture,* or any expression of feeling, on the part either of the Apostles or of the early Christians, corresponding to such a dreadful contingency. On the contrary, all Apostolic care, as we have already seen, seems to be for the Church. Warnings, exhortations, and instructions, are all addressed to believers *regarded as such*, and anxieties, tears, and prayers, are all reserved *for them*. There *must* be a reason for this; and, till we discover it, we shall only partially understand our position and work in the world, either as Christians or as men.

Perhaps we may learn something in this direction by

* The texts which are commonly, though erroneously, thought to convey such an intimation have been noticed at length elsewhere.

remembering that believers, in consequence of *the profession they have made*, have placed themselves in a very different position from that which is occupied by other men, since they are, consciously or unconsciously, candidates for the highest honours God himself can impart. *They* are men who, unlike many others, are undergoing their entire probation *now*. They may *rise* to be actual "partakers of the Divine nature;" they may *lose* through their negligence and carelessness this, their spiritual birthright; and, "after having preached to others," may themselves "become castaways," *i. e.*, be degraded and set aside as unfit for the Divine service. Worst of all,—for this, too, is possible,—they may, by pride and unbelief, become altogether "apostate," and irrevocably *perish* in their sins.

These are they (not the careless world, as is generally supposed) who, *as disciples*, are bidden to "enter in at the strait gate." It is *to them* (not to the multitude) that Christ puts the solemn question, "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Yea, though regarded as "holy brethren," and "partakers of the heavenly calling" (Heb. iii. 1), it is deemed needful to warn *them*, "not to harden their hearts, as did the Israelites in the day of provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness," lest God should sware in His wrath "that *they* should not enter into His rest" (iv. 1—11).

In dealing with the world at large, the Apostolic aim seems to have been always to keep in exact harmony with the mission of the Comforter,—in other words, to seek to convince men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come; and since we believe that the duty of the Church in all ages is to present truth as far as possible in the form, or rather on the principle, that marked the teaching of Christ

and of the Apostles, whether in Judea or in the Gentile world, we think our time will not be mis-spent, if we devote a part of it, at least, to a careful inquiry as to the method they pursued, so far as that method can be gathered from the pages of Scripture.

What that course was, and what were its results, are clearly before us in the Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles. We see there, as if we were present, the *oneness* of the message, and the *two-fold* character of the result,—the exact fulfilment, in short, of the Saviour's promise that, in connection with Apostolic faithfulness, the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, should renew the few, and convict the many.

Then, as now, we see *some* brought into such direct and positive contact with the truth, that they are, so to speak, *compelled* either consciously to accept, or as consciously to reject it. *To such* the message is, of necessity, "a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death." They who accept are, by that act, brought under a course of Christian education and training, the end of which, if not thwarted by unbelief and perversity, is ETERNAL LIFE. They who hate and despise are, by the same necessity, exposed to all that is included in the term, ETERNAL DEATH.

But others, and by far the greater number, evidently belong neither to the one class nor to the other. For first,—multitudes, nay, myriads, we might say, never *hear* the message; next,—other multitudes, owing, it may be, to the blindness of their hearts, never comprehend it. The Gospel is to them a parable, veiling rather than revealing mysteries, for the reception of which they do not seem to possess any corresponding state of mind. Other multitudes—perhaps owing to the imperfect way

in which the word is expounded—are but partially touched by the message of love and mercy; restrained, rather than quickened, softened, rather than subdued. The seed, in short, sometimes falls into ground where it is impossible that it should take root and grow, while much of it, to human eye, seems to be altogether wasted.

But it is not really so. For the amount of responsibility, and consequently of guilt, involved in dulness, pre-occupation, misconception, and neglect, God only can decide. That it will be found to vary as widely as human faces or human circumstances vary, is, at least, probable; one thing being certain, viz., that they who have *never heard* the message cannot be responsible for its rejection. The Apostle Paul clearly declares this,—"For how," says he, "*can* they hear without a preacher, or how can one preach unless he be sent?" The Lord himself proclaims the same truth when He says, even of the most rebellious,—"If I had not come and spoken unto them, *they had not had sin*" (John xv. 22).

Nothing can be more certain than that *man as man*, generally, if not universally, *admits* himself to be a sinner. His views of sin may be very imperfect,—very inadequate indeed,—but he will rarely dispute *the fact* of his transgression; or that according to the number and aggravated character of his violations of the Divine law must be his actual criminality. He may be told that, *theologically*, all are *alike guilty* in the sight of God, but he does not believe it; for he knows that the guilt of every human being is individual guilt; that it varies with character, opportunities, and circumstances; and that, according as these are improved or abused, it becomes more or less aggravated in the sight both of God and man.

As a rule, we firmly believe that men are, in the first instance, made sensible of their sinfulness, and saddened by the consciousness of it, just in proportion as they can be brought to view guilt *as a personal thing, and apart from all considerations of its evil in the abstract,* of its rise in Adam, or of its root in their own nature. A time may come, and frequently does,—for conviction of sin deepens as a man advances in holiness,—when other thoughts than those of which we speak will find place within him; but *at first* it is the consciousness of some personal guilt, coming within the range of his every-day experience, and *felt* to be wrong, ungrateful, and mean, which touches the heart; and it is eminently unwise and unscriptural to lead persons in such a state into regions of thought which are beyond their grasp,—which, therefore, have *to them* an air of unreality,—and which are consequently not unlikely to excite questions, doubts, and scepticisms, which, but for these trains of reasoning, would probably have never entered their minds; which, in fact, divert their attention from that which is practical, and substitute *a philosophy of sin* for heartfelt conviction and experience of it.

The truth is, no man ever *really feels* the burden of sin until he has honestly striven against it; just as no slave is conscious of his bondage until, by some means or other, he is made sensible of a higher life, and has had enkindled within him a desire to be free.

L.

THE SACRAMENTS.

THE PASSOVER AND THE LORD'S TABLE.

IT is difficult for us, in this age, vividly to realize the general joy which distinguished a Jewish Passover in the best days of the Hebrew Commonwealth; and still harder is it to form any adequate conception of the *domestic happiness* involved in a feast which brought gladness into the heart and home of every faithful Israelite. It was the most eminent of all their festivals; for it was the perpetual memorial of their signal deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and of the favour which God showed them, when the avenging angel slew in one night all the firstborn of their oppressors, but *passed over* the dwellings of Israel.

On this festive occasion, it was the custom at Jerusalem for the inhabitants to give the free use of their rooms and furniture to strangers, that all might celebrate the feast, and all feel that they were brethren. The group or family who united in the observance never consisted of more than twenty persons; it was ordinarily ten; our Lord's company consisted of thirteen, viz., Himself and the twelve. These groups were called brotherhoods, and the guests were entitled companions, or friends.*

* Where a family was too small to eat a whole lamb, two families were to join together; and if any household was too poor to purchase a lamb, its members were to be received as guests by those who were richer.

The company being placed around the table, they mingled a cup of wine with water, over which the master of the family gave thanks, and then drank it off. The thanksgiving for the wine was to this effect,—"Blessed be Thou, O Lord, who hast created the fruit of the vine;" and for the day as follows:—"Blessed be Thou for this good day, and for this holy convocation, which Thou hast given us for joy and rejoicing! Blessed be Thou, O Lord, who hast sanctified Israel and the times."

They then washed their hands, after which the table was furnished. The father of the family next took a small piece of salad, and having blessed God for creating the fruit of the ground, he ate it, as also did the other guests; after which, all the dishes were removed from the table, that the children might inquire and be instructed in the nature of the feast (Exod. xii. 25, 26). Then replacing the supper, they explained the import of the bitter herbs and the paschal lamb, and, over the *second* cup of wine, repeated the hundred and thirteenth and hundred and fourteenth psalms, with an eucharistic prayer.

The hands were now again washed, accompanied by an ejaculatory prayer; after which, the master of the house proceeded to *bless and break* a cake of the unleavened bread, which he distributed among the guests, reserving half of the cake beneath a napkin for the last morsel. They then ate the portion of cake which had been distributed, dipping the bread into the sauce. Next, they ate the flesh of the peace offerings, and then the flesh of the paschal lamb, which was followed by returning thanks to God, and again washing their hands.

A *third* cup of wine was now filled, over which they blessed God, whence it was called *the cup of blessing*.

Lastly, a *fourth* cup of wine was filled, called the cup of the hallel; over it they completed, either by singing or recitation, the great hallel, or hymn of praise, consisting of Psalms cxv. to cxviii. inclusive, with a prayer, and so concluded the passover.*

We note then regarding it, *first*, that it was a *household* feast; for it took place, not in the temple, nor yet in the synagogues,—although at one time there were 480 of these buildings in Jerusalem, to which they might have resorted—but in the *homes* of the people. It was not, therefore, a congregational assembly, but a household supper. For its performance, "upper rooms" were generally constructed in Jewish houses, and *here* it was that the Hebrew householder formally acted as the priest of his own house,—its teacher and its minister, in the highest solemnities of worship. Of this feast, it has been well said that, conducted as it was with music and worship, mingled with cheerful conversation and instruction in the highest truths, "it united the charm of an English Christmas gathering with the holiness of heaven."

Such was the passover generally. But it *might*, and doubtless was sometimes, taken amid tears, and clouded by the sadness of recent or expected calamity. Beloved members of the household might then be dying or recently dead; misfortune might have swept away all the worldly prospects of the family; or approaching ruin might be but too clearly casting its shadows before.

Something of this sort doubtless hovered over that upper room in which Jesus and his disciples met for the last time to celebrate the feast. He had told them He was about to

* See Horne's "Critical Introduction," who abridges from Lightfoot and others.

be delivered into the hands of sinners; He had signified who it was that should betray Him; He had warned Peter that before morning he would deny Him thrice; and their hearts were troubled.

But a new signification had now been given both to the bread and wine; for "as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; *this* is my body, which is given for you," —obviously intending that they should understand Him to say, "This *represents* my body given for you," for *the bread* was not given for them, but *Christ Himself*. After the same manner also, "He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the New Testament (or covenant), which is shed *for many* for the remission of sins;" or, as St. Luke records it,—"This cup *is the New Testament* (or covenant) in my blood, which is shed *for you*" (Comp. Matt. xxvi. 27, 28, and Luke xxii. 19, 20).

To these words, according to Luke, He added, after taking the bread, "This do in remembrance of me;" and according to St. Paul, who received it by special revelation, after taking the wine, "This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death *till He come*" (1 Cor. xi. 26).

That thirty years after this affecting scene, the Christian passover consisted of a social meal, partaken, if not in common, at least in one room, by rich and poor, there seems to be little doubt, from St. Paul's rebuke of the abuses which had crept into the Corinthian Church in connection with it. What we *now* understand by the term, "The Lord's Supper," viz., the symbolical breaking of bread

and drinking of wine, *then*, probably, took place at the close of a festival which seems to have been intended to correspond in many respects with the Jewish passover.

When or by what authority such a feast was appointed, is by no means clear; but it probably arose out of the old and delightful associations which the Jewish converts cherished in connection with the passover festival. Nothing would seem to them more natural than to institute such an *agape*, or love feast, and to connect it with the commemoration of the great sacrifice. Neander, speaking of this time, says,—"The holy supper continued to be connected with the common meal, in which all, as members of one family, joined, as in the primitive Jewish Church, and agreeably to its first institution." *.

The error of the Corinthians was two-fold;—*first*, they had converted that which was essentially a household feast into a public one. Hence the Apostle says, "When ye come together *unto one place*, this is not to eat," or,—as the margin reads,—"ye *cannot* eat the Lord's supper. Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in,"—habitations where, as of old, ye may meet in groups or companies? *Secondly*, they had ceased to regard the spirit of the feast, which, like the Jewish passover, had been evidently intended to develop the true brotherhood of the redeemed family; since, to avoid having their poorer brethren at their own houses, they had transferred the feast to the Church, where, *in little companies*, the rich with the rich, and the poor with the poor, they, *in professed union*, but in real separation, ate and drank. In this they followed an ancient

* Neander, on the "Planting and Training of the Christian Church." Ryland's translation, p. 194.

custom of the Greeks,* who were in the habit of holding entertainments, at which each one brought his food with him, and consumed it alone.

What! says the indignant apostle,—"Despise ye the Church of God, and shame them that have not?" *i.e.*, that have no houses, or, as it reads in the margin, "them that are poor?" As a natural result, that which the Apostle so condemns took place; every one took *his own* supper, and while one (the poor man) was hungry, having little or nothing to supply his table, the other (the rich man) was "drunken," *i.e.*, luxurious and self-indulgent. The whole thing had become *unreal*,—a mockery, and, *like all unreal things in Christian profession*, it was hateful in the sight of God.

When or how the social feast was given up does not appear. But that, in process of time, it *was* abandoned, seems clear, the symbolic breaking of bread, and drinking of wine, being again reverted to, as *the appointed mode* of showing forth the death of the Redeemer. We say "reverted to," because there is nothing to show that any feast corresponding to that of the passover was ever divinely appointed; and there is no reason to believe that it was the practice of the *first* Christians to do more, than eat and drink together in token of their love to one another, and to their common Lord.

The point which seems quite clear is, that the ordinance was *at first* household, rather than congregational in character; that it was a feast of love, consecrating *the home* of the believer; rather than a rite administered to hundreds at once, strangers for the most part to each other, or, at

* The predominant Grecian character and constitution of the Corinthian Church is manifest in many particulars. (See Neander.)

least, having little sympathy beyond that which may be supposed to be generated by publicly worshipping the same Lord within the same building, and listening to the teaching of the same minister.

Is it, then, unfair to urge that the practice of those Christians who are accustomed to unite in small companies to "break bread," without the presence or aid of an ordained minister, is at least a harmless one? To judge, or to condemn the principles on which, under existing circumstances, Christians now generally meet to take the Supper of the Lord, may be utterly unjustifiable; but it is surely not, therefore, either unlawful or unkind to contend, —if only it be done in a candid and charitable spirit,— for the liberty of adopting other modes, as equally acceptable to God.

In a second article, we shall look at the rite as it came to be viewed when regarded exclusively as a Church ordinance; and when, as such, it was elevated into a sacrament, clothed with mystic terrors, and administered only by priests. E.

STANDING NOTE.—Whatever may be the *apparent* character or tendency of any Articles found in "THE INTERPRETER," we wish it to be distinctly understood that *they are not intended* to encourage secession either from the Communion of the Church of England, or from any body of Protestant Dissenters. Secession leads by inevitable consequences to sectarianism; and sectarianism we abhor. Our sole aim is to promote such an amount of freedom of thought and liberty of action in church matters, *within* existing bodies, as may best tend to further that true Christian Unity which is *counteractive* of all Schism "in the Body."

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints—as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine*.

SALVATION.

(THIRD PAPER.)

THAT in Christian countries the multitude,—ignorant, thoughtless, and too often absolutely irreligious,—die hopefully, if not happily, can scarcely be disputed. The question recurs continually,—Whither do they go? "Say,—are they lost or saved?"

We believe that such persons live and die very

[Registered for transmission abroad.]

much as the crowds lived and died, who eighteen hundred years ago witnessed our Lord's miracles and heard his words, on the hills and in the plains of Judea. Whatever conclusions, therefore, we arrive at as to the one, must greatly affect our conclusions as to the other.

But here it will be said, "How can we arrive at any judgment at all on such a subject?" We reply, in one way only, by carefully observing our Lord's conduct and teaching in relation to these same multitudes when He was on earth. They were not ranked, we know, among the disciples,—for He distinctly tells us that He spake to them "in parables, that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand" (Luke viii. 10). It is equally certain they were not classed with the Scribes and Pharisees, whom He denominates "vipers;" He never says *to them*, "How shall *ye* escape the damnation of hell?"

On the contrary, His sympathies seem to have been, as a rule, with these common people. He heals their diseases; He forgives their sins, whatever that phrase may be intended to include; He mourns over them as "sheep without a shepherd;" and He regards them as a field "already white unto the harvest."

These are *Scripture facts*, and we ask, Are they intended to teach anything? or are they to be altogether over-ridden by *inferences of our own*, drawn from other Scriptures, such as the declaration of our Lord to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," or the various statements in the Epistles which speak of Christians as

"a peculiar people," called with a "holy calling," regenerated by the Spirit, sanctified by grace, and preserved unto the end?

We know how easy it is to maintain that such inferences are *necessary*;—that a man unconverted is morally unfit for the companionship of the redeemed; and that, were such an one in heaven, he could have no sympathy either with its inhabitants or its employments. We are not insensible to the force of this reasoning; and within limits, we fully admit its truthfulness. But we cannot, therefore, come to the conclusion that no man can be saved who is not on earth made morally and spiritually "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light;" or that all, who are not made "partakers of the Divine nature" here, are for ever left to the companionship of Satan, and doomed to eternal hatred of God and goodness in the regions of darkness and despair.

We cannot admit such a view, (1) Because it is by no means clear that our Lord's words to Nicodemus *ought* to be understood in the sense ordinarily attached to them. (2) Because other texts usually adduced to prove that the way to heaven is very narrow, and that *few* reach the realms of bliss, are for the most part irrelevant, being addressed, not to the unbelieving world, but to the disciples *as such*. (3) Because the course pursued by the Saviour towards the unconverted, both in His teaching and conduct, are inconsistent with the supposition that none but the regenerate can be saved; and (4) Because the later revelations

of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles, lead to the conclusion that the salvation of mankind, and the glorification of the saints, are by no means one and the same thing.

The necessities of a systematic theology, consisting, as we have frequently said, mainly of human inferences, may require us to believe, on the one hand, that the young man whom Jesus "loved," since he was not "perfect," was for ever abandoned to Satan; and on the other, that the Divine Redeemer, while healing the diseases of the body, kept back the Word of Life from the perishing multitude, *lest* they should be saved: but, apart from such bias, renewed hearts, interpreting their Lord by the love with which He has Himself inspired them, revolt from such conclusions, and feel assured that the *highest form* of spiritual blessing only was withheld; that he who could not give up *all* for Christ was sent away sorrowing, only because he was morally unfit to rank with the Apostles; and that they whose eyes were "closed," lest they should see, were blinded only *for a time*, and, if in judgment, in mercy also; for He who said on one occasion, "For judgment (*i. e.*, as a test) am I come into the world," assures us on another that He came "not to judge" (to condemn) the world, but to "save it" (John ix. 39; iii. 17; xii. 47).

Never should we forget that it was the same voice which said to one, "If thou wilt be perfect, sell that thou hast, and follow me" (Matt. xix. 21), that said to another, *who wished to follow Him*, "Return to

thine own house,"—be thankful for deliverance, and "show how great things God hath done unto thee" (Luke viii. 38, 39); that the crowds, sustained more than once by the Lord's bounty, were, when fed, *sent away;* and that from these masses many forms of truth were avowedly withheld, because they were not able to receive them.

To what conclusion can we come, then, but that the spiritually unenlightened,—those who *have never understood*, and therefore neither accepted nor rejected the Gospel,—whether involved in the thick darkness of heathenism, or lost amid the mists of a superstitious and sectarian Christianity, are saved, but with a lower salvation; saved, not in the sense in which apostles and martyrs are saved; but saved from the "captivity" of Satan, and brought under a probation adapted to their weakness, and in harmony with what is to be their final position in the universe?

Where, and in what precise way, such probation will be effected, we do not profess to know. We think it most probable that it will *commence* immediately after the Resurrection; that it will *follow* the teaching and discipline of the invisible world, so far as that teaching may be brought to bear on the disembodied spirit; that it will be *carried on* upon the new earth in which dwelleth righteousness; and that it will be accomplished *by and through the agency of the Elect Church.*

That the saints of God, "the Church of the First-born," will in that blessed state be free from sin and

all its seductions, we doubt not, for they will be united to their Lord; but there is nothing to show that this will be the condition of *all* who rise from the dead, or that they, who have had no probation on earth, will have no enemy to fight in the world (or age) that is to come.

Salvation is, in Scripture, never regarded as separable from *probation.* And yet it must be so, if infants, and idiots, and the utterly unenlightened, are to be regarded as saved, *in the same sense,* and with the same glorious results, as the faithful of all ages. For then must heaven be entered by millions without faith, or love, or holiness, or discipline, or a new heart; *or* —which is still more opposed to all that is revealed concerning God—these same millions must be regarded as lost; multitudes of them without having committed actual sin,—without having, even once, exercised a rebellious will; and other multitudes without ever having heard of the Law which condemns them, or of the Saviour whom they are supposed in this case, by something like a legal fiction, to have rejected.

But the entire difficulty passes away, if we are permitted to suppose that such, while saved from the captivity of Satan, are not yet made partakers of the glory that shall be revealed; that faculties, never developed here, will only find a fuller development in other states of existence; and that the offspring of believers, under the care and love of parents then perfected in Christ, will there be trained for "glory, honour, and immortality," in a school far higher and

purer than that of the world they so prematurely left.

Whether such texts as John xi. 25, "I am the Resurrection AND the Life," phrases *not necessarily* synonymous, may mean that the one (the Resurrection) is of the body to physical life and for all, while the other (the Life), which is spiritual, is for the Church; or Rom. iii. 30, "It is one God which shall justify the circumcision BY faith, and uncircumcision THROUGH faith,"—a distinction "not to be made," as Dean Alford says, "too much of," yet not without its meaning; or 2 Thess. i. 10, "To be GLORIFIED in His saints, and to be ADMIRED (wondered at) in all them that believe;" or Heb. xii. 23, "The general assembly and *Church of the Firstborn*," as contrasted with "the spirits of just men (among the heathen) *made* perfect;" or 2 Tim. ii. 10, "The salvation which is in Christ Jesus, WITH (*i. e.*, in addition) eternal glory;" or John i. 4, "The life was the light of men," *i. e.*, Christ the life (of the Church), and that life the *light* of multitudes who partake not of the life; or such passages as, "God gave His Son" for *the world*, "that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish," and Christ gave Himself for *the Church*," that He might sanctify and cleanse it, and present it to Himself a glorious Church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing;"—whether, we say, any of these Scriptures bear on the question now under our notice; whether or no the distinctions in them, to which we have adverted, are real and important, and intended to teach us what

all its seductions, we doubt not, for they will be united to their Lord; but there is nothing to show that this will be the condition of *all* who rise from the dead, or that they, who have had no probation on earth, will have no enemy to fight in the world (or age) that is to come.

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they *appear* to teach, we will not positively affirm. But there is one text which it seems difficult to read without receiving a strong impression that it is intended to indicate the existence of two classes of *saved* persons. We mean that in the Hebrews, where St. Paul, speaking of the blessedness of sorrow to a child of God, says, "*But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons*" (Heb. xii. 8).

The precise distinction here drawn by the Apostle is indicated under the figure of illegitimate (νόθοι) and legitimate (υἱοι) children. The words are specially addressed to *believers* as such. *Both* classes of children are therefore sons, although not in the same sense. The one is the child who inherits the Father's name, wealth, and position; the other, although provided for, is altogether in a lower rank,—helped or supported, as may be needful; acknowledged, but not honoured.

What we really want to know is, whether or not we are to understand, from these words, that some *of the saved* will occupy the position of unrecognized, and others of recognized children? It is difficult to see what else *can* be intended.

The general lesson imparted is plain; that persecution, severe discipline, and painful trial, so far from being indications of *a want of love* to us on the part of God, are, in fact, *evidences* that they who are "exercised thereby" are intended for higher services and nobler rank in the world to come.

But how, on this supposition, is it possible to avoid

the conclusion that *two distinct classes of saved persons* will be found in that coming age, and that the illegitimate are those who, though delivered from the captivity of Satan, and brought under the rule of Christ, are yet not invested with the dignity and glory of the Elect Church?

It may, indeed, be said, that the "bastard" is a child only by creation, and therefore, as such, has no share in a blessing which is of grace. But this goes on the supposition that the writer *meant*, "If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers," then are ye undistinguishable from those who are "in danger of hell fire"—he does not, however, *say* anything of the kind, nor is there any reason to suppose that he intends to leave such an impression.

Again, in reading the Epistle to the Philippians (iii. 15), we find a somewhat similar distinction made by the Apostle Paul; where, after speaking of himself as counting "all things but loss," if by any means he "might attain unto the resurrection of the dead," and as ever pressing "toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," he adds, "Let us, therefore, *as many as be perfect*, be thus minded;" indicating, that among the Philippians there were those who, like himself, were already striving for the crown, and others, who needed to have this high calling revealed to them. Some, indeed, there were who were "enemies of the cross of Christ," whose "end is destruction;" but others were plainly regarded as imperfect and ill-instructed persons, who, though

professedly Christian, had "not apprehended" that for which they had been "apprehended of Christ Jesus."

It is because salvation is a thing of degree, and because of the consequent possibility of losing ground for eternity by continued life, that premature death is sometimes a blessing. When our Lord says, "Whoso shall offend (hinder, or become a stumbling-block to) one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea" (Matt. xviii. 6), He expresses this thought. It is as if He had said, It is better to die than to deteriorate; better to die *to-day*, than to sin in some aggravated form *to-morrow;* better for yourself through all eternity to be drowned now, than to live to hinder the progress of others. And why? Simply because death is a less evil than sin,—a doctrine to which every true-hearted disciple instinctively responds.

And now, in the light of all these considerations, let us look at the great *facts of the world*,—with which, it should never be forgotten, the *facts of Divine revelation* cannot clash. These, explain it as we may, bring before us, as we have already said, not two, but *three classes* of character, even among men who alike live under the light of the Christian dispensation; those who, by Divine grace made free, *resist* evil, and by faith obtain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; those who, from ignorance or weakness, or under the pressure of overwhelming circumstances, as "captives," *submit* to the evil they

cannot overcome; and those who, from sheer wickedness, *as the voluntary servants* of Satan, love iniquity, and rejoice in it as their chosen portion.

Accepting these distinctions *as real*,—for they cannot be set aside or denied,—we again ask, Are they, or are they not, in harmony with what Scripture (if read without reference to existing schemes of theology) would lead us to expect? If they are, let us thank God, and, with renewed courage and energy, carry on the warfare against the world, the flesh, and the devil, both in ourselves and in all around us, assured of this, that although multitudes may refuse to believe that God hath called them to glory, honour, and immortality, inasmuch as they *will* not come to Christ that they may have "life," our labour is not lost, nor does it necessarily aggravate their guilt and misery. The message we bring is one of "life unto life," and it *may*, by wilful rejection, become "a savour of death unto death." But such rejection is happily the exception, not the rule. Dulness, misapprehension, and indifference are the evils we have mainly to contend with; and, in relation to these, it is indeed a comfort to feel that God permits us to believe that a day is coming when the vail shall be removed; that what we accomplish not now, shall be accomplished hereafter; that though we fall short of our hopes, we cannot fall short of His purposes; that no word of God, however feebly or imperfectly ministered by us, shall return to Him void, or fail to accomplish the design for which He sent it.

A.

APOSTOLIC PREACHING.

(THIRD PAPER.)

WE propose now diligently to search the Scriptures, in order to ascertain, so far as it is possible to do so, how the Lord, and, subsequently, His Apostles, presented truth to the different classes with which they came in contact; noticing the circumstances under which the message took the form of information, encouragement, entreaty, warning, or threatening.

In doing this, we shall begin by a careful examination of the three first or synoptic Gospels; then take that of John, which is, in many respects, peculiar; then the Acts of the Apostles; and, finally, the Epistles. In each case it will be necessary to observe whether the parties addressed are regarded as believers or unbelievers, as disciples, as opponents, or as indifferent; and also to notice whether the message be delivered in the synagogue, or by the sea-side; to Jews, or to a mixed multitude; to the religious world, or to the outer circle; whether it seems intended to conceal, or to reveal; to excite thought, or to demand obedience; to convict, or to convert.

John the Baptist, of course, first appears upon the scene; but he comes before us, in the first three Gospels, only as the forerunner, in the character of a Jewish prophet; and his message to Israel is a command that they should turn to God *as His people*, repent of sin, be baptized, and so prepare the way of Messiah. The "wrath" from which he calls upon them "to flee," and the "unquenchable fire" which he warns them is approaching, is that which was involved in the destruction of Jerusalem, and the deso-

lation of Judea.* "The axe" was even then lying at "the root of the tree" (Matt. iii. 7—12).

For some time, this call to national repentance seems to have been simply *prolonged* by our Lord himself and His Apostles (Matt. iv. 17). After a while, however, the teaching becomes more enlarged, and it differs, in every case, with the class to whom it is addressed.

To THE JEWS generally, as they are found in the synagogues, recognized as the chosen people, and numbered among the religious world of that day, the message is JEWISH. It is such as might have been delivered by one of the olden Prophets. It then becomes *progressive*, and to the effect that the kingdom they had so long expected to see, was about to appear; that the Messiah, as John had indicated, was even now among them,—a fact respecting which they might satisfy themselves by a careful examination of the Scriptures they regarded as Divine (Luke iv. 16—29). It was in this character that, first "the twelve," and afterwards "the seventy," were sent out; their instructions being to throw themselves entirely, *as Jewish teachers*, upon the hospitality always accorded to such; to verify their claim by miracles of healing; and, if rejected, to shake off the dust of their feet against the perverse, as the ordinary authorized Jewish teacher would, under such circumstances do, if similarly despised. The Sanhedrim, indeed, would not, in this case, support the message, but One greater than the Sanhedrim would do it most effectually. The judgment threatened is against those who, after having seen the miracles, and witnessed the healing

* So Dr. Gill and others. Dean Alford says, "John is now speaking in the true character of a prophet, foretelling the wrath soon to be poured on the Jewish nation."

by which the message was vindicated, deliberately rejected it (Matt. x. 6—14). Had it been otherwise,—had adequate evidence not been presented, we are distinctly told they would not have been accounted guilty (John xv. 22).

To THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES, regarded as religious leaders, the great professors of the day, the language of the Lord is invariably *severe*, sometimes ironical (Matt. ix. 13); at other times fearful (xii. 31); always denunciatory, —"vipers" (xii. 34); evil and adulterous (ver. 39); worse than heathen (41, 42); hypocrites (xv. 7); envious (xxi. 16); murderers (ver. 45); self-willed and scornful, despising the wedding-garment (xxii. 12, 13); grasping, hollow, blasphemous, and proud; self-destroyers, ripe for the damnation of hell (xxiii. 13—33; Mark iii. 22; Luke vii. 30). But, let it be observed, in every case, condemnation is called forth by some flagrant act of wickedness,—conduct which, men themselves being judges, was utterly without excuse.

To THE PEOPLE generally, and emphatically to the poor, the life of Christ, and, subsequently, that of His Apostles, was one unceasing stream of beneficence. He seems never weary of healing their diseases (Matt. xiv. 14), and He never ceases to pity their condition (Matt. ix. 36). He casts devils out of them (viii. 28—34); He pardons their sins, whatever that forgiveness may be supposed to include or to imply (ix. 2); and He accepts of the simplest faith an ignorant soul can offer,—faith in the Saviour's power and willingness to cure bodily disease (ix. 2—28). All is in harmony with the announcement to the shepherds, of "peace and good will" to man, *as man* (Luke ii. 14).

Nor does the character of the teaching point to any different conclusion. The people are warned against their authorized religious guides (Matt. xxiii. 2—12); they are

told not to rely on *outward privileges* (viii. 12), or to imagine that *outward observances* would suffice (xv. 11); that Christ is their Master; that they all are brethren (xxiii. 8); and that *to them* the Gospel is preached (xi. 5). They are spoken of as "a harvest," waiting only to be reaped (ix. 38; Luke x. 2; xix. 48); and it is *of them*, regarded as weak, and easily hindered in their approaches to God, that He says, "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, shall in no wise lose his reward (Matt. x. 42). Once only are they charged with hypocrisy, for not discerning the signs of the times (Luke xii. 54).

And yet these people do not seem to be numbered among the elect; for in relation to "the kingdom," its mysteries, and its future history, they are spoken to only in parables, that "hearing they might hear and not understand," evidently because their minds were not prepared to receive these things; the truth is *therefore* so veiled, that, while it can be comprehended by the few, it may remain an enigma to the many. When they follow in crowds, obviously misapprehending the nature of discipleship, they are, one might almost say, repelled by the mysterious announcement that, "if a man hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, his own life also, he cannot be a disciple." What can this mean, if it be not intended to show that, although unfit for the perils of the warfare in which the Church was about to be engaged, they were not abandoned either to hopeless despair or to eternal ruin? If they were so abandoned, it is indeed most extraordinary that, while *healing* all, the Lord Jesus should, so far as the record indicates, have *warned* so few; and still more extraordinary is it, that,

at the last of all, on His way to crucifixion, He should have bid the daughters of Jerusalem weep, not at the prospect of the eternal misery which was coming upon them and all the unconverted, but for the sorrows that were about to fall upon their children in the dreadful siege Jerusalem would, before long, have to endure (Luke xxiii. 28).

To INDIVIDUALS, of whatever class, a somewhat different rule is applied. Each is dealt with according to his peculiar condition and circumstances. One He loves, and yet sends him away sorrowing, because he is not fit for service. He wished to be "perfect," yet could not pay the price (Matt. xix. 16); others He positively discourages, yet in love, and for a reason (Luke ix. 57—62). Through others, He *rebukes* special sins, such as covetousness, love of riches, and faithlessness (Luke xii. 13—33); *proclaims* the truth, that special advantages involve special responsibilities (Matt. xi. 20); connects all these things with Divine Sovereignty (ver. 26); and recognizes as an indispensable qualification for profiting by His instructions, *a prepared heart*, and some *prior knowledge* (Matt. xiii. 12; Mark iv. 25).

It is to THE DISCIPLES, therefore, that the Lord chiefly addresses Himself, and by the character of His instructions *to them*, it is that we learn how He would have Christians taught; what His message is to those who are not only regarded by others as believers, but who regard themselves as being already "in Christ." It is *to them*, in the main that the Sermon on the Mount is addressed. The whole discourse supposes previous discipleship; its entire aim is the promotion of *growth* in the Divine life; and its one purpose, the elevation of the children of the kingdom to a higher platform of daily conduct than that which is occupied by the children of the world.

But this is far from being all. Strange as it may seem, nearly every text, which is now used to awaken and alarm the ungodly, was addressed by the Lord, *not* to the unconverted multitude, but to the disciples themselves. It is *they*, not the men of the world, who are bidden to "enter in at the strait gate" (Matt. vii. 13); it is *they* who are warned against building houses on "the sand," and reminded that "many shall say in that day, Lord, Lord," whom He will not own (ver. 21—28); it is *they* who are told to fear not them which kill the body, but to fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (Matt. x. 28); and it is *they* who are to feel that, if they carry not their lives in their hands, they are unworthy of their Master (ver. 38.) It is *to them*, and in relation to their own conduct, that the question is put, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Matt. xvi. 26). It is *to them* He speaks when He says, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xviii. 3); it is *they* who are to cut off the offending hand or foot, lest they fall into hell fire (ver. 8); and it is *they* who are to be delivered to the tormentors, if from their hearts they "forgive not every one his brother their trespasses" (ver. 35).

That *the people* often *listened* to these discourses, and were astonished at the doctrine, is certain; but they were specially addressed, not to them, but to the disciples; for, so far as we can judge from the recorded narratives of the three Evangelists we have examined, the aim of the Redeemer, throughout His entire ministry, was rather to elevate the few than to convert the many; to "purify to Himself a peculiar people," rather than to permeate the masses with the knowledge of His will. L.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE SUPPER.

(SECOND PAPER.)

"BREAKING of bread" was the one simple phrase by which the first Christians expressed the purpose for which they assembled together, when they commemorated the love of their risen Lord. Of the three thousand who, at Pentecost, received the word with gladness, all we are told is, that they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in *breaking of bread*, and in prayers. They were "daily, with one accord, in the temple," yet "breaking bread" not there, but "from house to house," or, as it reads in the margin, "*at home*" (Acts ii. 42—46).

It was at Troas, upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together *to break bread*, that Paul preached to them (Acts xx. 7); and although, in the Epistle to the Corinthians, the same Apostle speaks of the ordinance, in one place, under the title of "the Lord's table," and in another as "the Lord's supper," he still associates with both these terms the earlier phrase. "The bread which we break," he says, "is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. x. 17—21; xi. 20.)

At what precise period this simple but expressive term was superseded by others, implying a very different conception of the ordinance itself, it is not, perhaps, easy to say; but it is certain that, soon after the apostolic age, the rite comes before us in a new character, and bearing a new name. It is now, *in common with many other things*, called

in the Greek churches "a mystery," and in the Latin ones, "a sacrament."

It is not easy to say what was precisely meant by this term. In the Tridentine Catechism, a sacrament is defined to be "a sensible thing, which, by Divine appointment, hath the power of *causing*, as well as of signifying, holiness and righteousness ("Catech. Trident.," Part ii. n. 10). In the Heidelberg Catechism, generally adopted by the Calvinists of Germany, it is "*a holy, visible sign and seal;*" a seal in the sense of "an assurance to the person who worthily receives it, of the blessings of the covenant of grace." In the Larger Catechism of the Church of Scotland, it is "a holy ordinance, instituted by Christ, to signify, *seal*, and exhibit unto those within the covenant of grace, the benefits of His mediation," &c. In the Twenty-fifth Article of the Church of England, it is not only "a badge or token of Christian men's profession, but rather a certain sure witness, and effectual sign of grace, and God's good will towards us, *by the which He doth work invisibly in us*, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in Him." Mr. Watson, one of the most eminent of Wesleyan theological writers, considers it "*a federal rite and confirming seal.*" Many, if not most of the Nonconformist divines, regard it in this light.

The word *sacramentum*, etymologically denotes anything sacred. It was understood, at a very early period, to imply any sacred obligation; but, more specifically, the oath of the soldiers, in swearing allegiance to their commander. In the Vulgate, and elsewhere, the word "sacrament" is used as a translation of the Greek term μυστηριον, mystery; for the Greek Christians called the sacred symbols of the faith *holy mysteries*, while the Latins called them "sacraments."

This strange alteration in the *name* of the ordinance had a significant meaning. It clearly implied a change of view as to its *nature;* for very soon after, it came to be regarded as the "ineffable," and sometimes the "horrific" mystery. The table of the Lord was turned into the "dreadful and mystic table;" and the simple rites of the Christian religion,—too fearful for the vulgar gaze,—were concealed from the eye of the profane, as if they were of peculiar and awful sanctity.*

Whether this great and signal change, in relation to the nature and character of the Lord's supper, is to be regarded only *as the natural development* of truth, or whether it is to be considered as indicating the rapid growth of that "mystery of iniquity" which the Apostle Paul says had, in his own day, "begun to work," it is not our province now to determine. Certain it is, that superstitions of all kinds had, by this time, multiplied; that the minister of Jesus Christ was now transformed into a sacrificing priest, and the foundations fully and firmly laid, of that great apostacy which ultimately reached its maturity under the Roman pontiffs; for the "Eucharistic rite," as has been truly said, was "*the hinge*" on which the ecclesiastical economy of the earlier ages turned. Our object at present is rather to inquire how far these views were sanctioned at the Reformation, and whether or no they are sustained by Scripture.

That great differences of opinion existed among the Reformers in relation to the Lord's supper, is notorious. Luther, and many others, certainly continued to regard the ordinance very much from a Romish, or, rather, anti-Nicene stand-point; while Zuinglius and his followers fell back on

* See Dr. Halley "On the Sacraments," pp. 3 to 49, chiefly quoted above.

more primitive principles and practice. The *result* of these conflicting opinions may be considered as embodied in the confessions of the different churches, as they exist to the present day. They have been thus stated in the able Lectures to which we have already referred.

"The doctrine of the Church of England, as well as of the Lutheran Churches, is, that the sacrament of the Lord's supper is *a means of communicating the grace of a spiritual participation of Christ.* This doctrine is maintained in two distinct modes, by two different parties in the English Church. One party asserts that grace is *inseparable* from the due administration of the sacrament, and *invariably communicated by it*, unless it be resisted by an unworthy reception; the other, that grace is *not inseparable* from the sacrament, but *frequently*, or occasionally, imparted by it, as by one of several means designed for the conversion and salvation of men."

"The doctrine of the Puritans, the Scotch Presbyterians, and many foreign Protestants of the Calvinistic Churches, is, that the sacrament is a federal rite, a ratification of the evangelical covenant, made to those who profess to receive it upon the supposition that their profession is sincere, and so ensuring to them all the blessings which are promised to believers."

Now, so far as these differing opinions indicate some of the points on which Christians separate one from another; so far as they are landmarks of churches or sects; so far as they are badges of religious parties, we do not feel the least interest in them, although we are quite aware that, in the opinion of many, theological questions of deep and vital importance are supposed to be involved.

The one sole question that concerns us is, *How far they*

are any of them scriptural? What we want to know is, not whether this or that theological opinion be the most plausible, but whether *any one of them* has a deep and sure foundation in the teachings of Holy Writ. It may be a matter of small moment whether we call the ordinance in question a supper or a sacrament, a seal or a federal rite; but it is of the utmost consequence that we should retain, in connection with the ordinance itself, by whatever name we may call it, those thoughts and feelings *only* which the Lord himself has sanctioned, and which holy Scripture sustains.

Where then, we ask, apart from reasonings and deductions which are purely human, and which *may be*, therefore, altogether fantastic, is the authority for calling the communion a seal, a federal rite, or, in fact, anything beyond what the Apostle calls it, the "Lord's supper," the "Lord's table," the "breaking of bread," in memory of the dying love of the Lord Jesus? We candidly confess we have searched diligently, but cannot find any authority whatever for these Puritan or patristic innovations. We firmly believe that, to most thoughtful persons, such terms as "seal," "federal rite," "sacrament," are, when applied to the Lord's supper, incomprehensible, if not unmeaning; and we suspect that they are retained by Presbyterians and Nonconformists, chiefly because they are supposed to throw a mystic solemnity over an ordinance, admission to which is now made the usual badge of discipleship, and whose administration it is therefore thought could not be thrown open to laymen, or made "social," like prayer and praise, without introducing disorder, and breaking down the various walls of separation which now divide church from church, sect from sect, professors of religion from the ungodly and unbelieving.

But is this, or any other supposed advantage, sufficient to justify us in depriving the Church of its family character, by forbidding, or even discouraging, its members from ever commemorating in that capacity their Lord's death, and signifying their own oneness of spiritual life in Him? We have no hesitation in saying, we think not.

One question, indeed, remains in connection with this subject, which cannot in few words be disposed of; for, on its decision rests the truth or falsehood of entire systems of theology. It is this,—"Has God anywhere taught us that spiritual blessing can be obtained by and through material appliances? Is it *a fact* that, in any case whatever,—however mysterious or inexplicable such a fact might be to us,—God has linked together that which is spiritual and that which is material, either by associating with consecration, the actual conversion of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ; by making the elements, in any other way, *vehicles of grace;* or by indissolubly uniting the mystic but real sustentation of spiritual life in the believer, with the worthy reception,—whatever may be the right mode,—of the sacrament of the supper? *That*, we say, is the all-important question.

Answered in one way, it justifies those who believe that "a peculiar effluence of supernatural grace is certainly imparted to the devout recipient of the holy communion;" in the necessity, therefore, of its sacred symbols being consecrated and administered by priestly hands; and in the consequent sinfulness of those who profess either to consecrate or to administer it, without having received the rite of ordination from the bishop of an apostolic church.

Answered in another way, it disposes at once of all controversies relative to transubstantiation, or consubstantia-

tion; and of all disputes, ancient or modern, as to the conditions under which mysterious spiritual benefits flow from the eating of bread or drinking of wine in the supper of the Lord.

In a succeeding article, under the title of MATERIALISM IN RELIGION, we shall endeavour to deal with this interesting and important inquiry.

ERRATUM IN LAST NUMBER.

Page 130, line 13 from the top, for "Matt. ix. 28," read "Compare Matt. ix. 2—6 with ver. 28."

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints—as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine.*

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RESTITUTION.

THAT a time or times of Restitution (whatever that term may precisely mean) is in reserve for our ruined and fallen world, was one of the earliest announcements of the Apostles after the Ascension of their Lord. Nothing can be more explicit than the declaration of St. Peter to the Jews, that the same Jesus Christ, whom they had crucified, should *come again;* that Heaven (so to speak) concealed Him,

[Registered for transmission abroad.]

only until* *the times of restitution*† of all things (Acts iii. 21; comp. Acts i. 6); and that these times were *the same times* of which God had spoken by the mouth of all His holy Prophets since the world began:—the times, when, in accordance with ancient prophecy, the lion should lie down with the lamb, and "the knowledge of the Lord cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea."

That this "time of restitution" was in some way or other, in the apostolic discourse, connected with the resurrection, is also plain from what immediately follows:—"And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain (or ruler) of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through ("in the person of,"—*Alford*) Jesus, the resurrection from the dead" (Acts iv. 1—2).

The doctrine of *the resurrection* they do not appear to have been teaching on this occasion, except in connection with that of a restitution of all things. Their offence was *not* that they preached the restitution spoken of by the Prophets, but that they

* ἀχρι. "*Not during*, as the advocates of the present spiritual sense of the passage wish to render it, but *until*." (*Alford.*)

† "To render ἀποκαταστασις fulfilment, is against all precedent. And in the sense of *restoration*, I cannot see how it can be applied to the work of the Spirit, as proceeding during this interim state in the hearts of men. This would be contrary to all Scripture analogy. I understand it, then, of the *glorious restoration of all things*, the παλιγγενεσία which, as Peter here says, is the theme of all the Prophets from the beginning." (*Alford.*)

declared it to be at the resurrection, and *through* Jesus Christ.

We are desirous of ascertaining *what* the restitution spoken of may be supposed to include, and *when* it may be expected to take place?

Dr. Ellicott, Dean of Exeter, and Professor of Divinity in King's College, London, has endeavoured to furnish us with a reply in a small volume of Sermons preached before the University of Cambridge, first published in 1858, and reprinted, by special request, in 1862. The title of the volume is "The Destiny of the Creature."

The particular discourse to which we are about to draw attention is entitled "Restitution," and founded on the text,—"And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. xxi. 5). Its *peculiarity* consists in the very different impression which it leaves upon the mind relative to the bearing of the Gospel upon the race, from that which is usually left by orthodox preachers.

That *such a sermon* should have been delivered before the University, printed, extensively read, and regarded as a satisfactory counteractive to the speculations of Mr. Maurice (for such it professes to be), indicates either a wide spread dissatisfaction with the usual method of treating such subjects, *or*, which is perhaps more likely, an increasing conviction that some of the later phases of scepticism can only be successfully met by a calm and thorough re-examination of the entire testimony of Scripture, relative to

the future lot of humanity. In either case, it will be hailed by thoughtful persons as an important contribution towards that fuller, freer, and yet thoroughly reverent study of Scripture, which is one of the greatest wants of the age.

"It is," says the Dean, "perhaps a duty that we owe to ourselves, not to shrink from a humble and reverential attempt to grasp the true outlines of a teaching which includes so much that is consolatory; and that too, more especially, as there is no province in speculative theology in which modern thought has assumed more mistaken and more presumptuous attitudes. Much do I fear, that, day by day, opinions more or less allied to that seductive form of belief called 'Universalism,'—or, in plain English, the belief that all will come right at last, however wrong now,—are quietly winning their way among the children of this world's wisdom, and that they already number far more secret adherents than at first sight we may be inclined to believe."

Instead of wasting time in abusing his opponents, the Professor wisely remarks,—"It may do us all good, especially in these dangerous days, if we spend a short time on those portions and passages of Scripture, of which such opinions are the distorted refractions; and if we further endeavour, by sober and scriptural induction, to gain a true knowledge of what God's Word tells us of this restitution,—what appear to be its nature and characteristics,—and what, if any, the necessary limits of its application."

Taking as a basis the unquestionable fact of the unity of the race—one in Adam, one in Christ; one in sin, and one in redemption; yet allowing for the equally unquestionable fact, that *individuals* (alas! how many!) can and do deliberately sunder themselves from the living unity of their race, and from Him who is its Head and Representative, and so make their future eternally and irrevocably a ruin, he selects *three texts* for examination, which seem above others to bear *directly* on the subject of restitution.

The *first* is found in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. "All things are of God, who reconciled *us* unto Himself by Christ, and gave to us the ministry of the reconciliation; for that God was in Christ," (or, as he thinks the more plausible construction,) "for that God in Christ was reconciling *the world* unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2 Cor. v. 18).

"Who," says he, "shall dare to remit these words? It is a reconciliation between God and *all* His intelligent creatures. It is a reconciliation actually *effected*, and it includes neither more nor less than all mankind. It is accomplished, not only *by means of* Christ, but *in* Him, as the Redeemer and true Representative of humanity."

The *second* text is from the Epistle to the Colossians. "For in Him it pleased the whole fulness (of the Godhead) to dwell, and by Him to bring into former reconciliation all things unto Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; by Him,

I say, whether they be the things upon the earth, or the things in the heavens" (Col. i. 19, 20).

"In the former text, the reconciliation was mainly regarded as *past;* here the language seems to hint at applications more expressly *future.*" It is not only to reconcile as before; it is *here,* "to reconcile back again" (ἀποκαταλλάξαι), to re-establish a condition which existed when God looked with Divine complacency on His creatures, and spoke of all as "very good." Further, "what in the first text was described as "the world," here receives the noticeable amplification, "all things; whether they be things on earth, or things in Heaven."

The *third* text is from the Epistle to the Ephesians. "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to the good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, in regard of *the dispensation of the fulness of times,* to sum up again (for Himself) all things in Christ,—the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth,—even in Him, in whom we were also chosen for His inheritance" (Ephes. i. 9, 10).* *Then,* at the *appointed* hour,—for this is the meaning of the fulness of time (Gal. iv. 4),—will He "gather together in one all things in Christ," whether in heaven or earth, *i. e.,* visible or invisible. How this can be interpreted of the present dispensation (so Gill and others) it is difficult to see. Dean Alford translates, "the economy of the fulfilment of the seasons;" and objects to its being explained by the passage in the Galatians.

* The renderings are Dean Ellicott's.

Still the difficulty remains, *in what sense* will all things, visible and invisible, *ever* be gathered together in Christ? It is clearly a gathering *distinct from*, although including, the "chosen before the foundation of the world" (Ephes. i. 4); since God makes known the mystery of His will to the Elect, *in order that*, in due time, the gathering may be accomplished (ver. 9, 10); and it is exceedingly difficult to understand such a passage apart from the expectation of a time, when the *apparently lost* myriads of mankind shall again appear upon the scene, and find a Saviour whom they never knew upon earth.

In the *third* chapter of this Epistle (ver. 21), in a magnificent doxology, glory is ascribed to Christ *in the Church*, "throughout all ages;" "that is," says Dean Alford, "in the Church, *as its theatre before men*, to all the generations of the age of the ages." *If this be so*, it is certain, that not only the Church as the glorifier of Christ, but *men capable of recognizing the glory* (which lost spirits can never do) must exist somewhere, *as distinct from the Church*, long after the limited period of this world's duration.

This doctrine of "a ransom for all," says the Apostle Paul to Timothy (1 Tim. ii. 6), is one "to be testified" (*or*, a testimony) "in due time," apparently indicating, that though Christ was then preached as having died for all, the time had not yet arrived when it would be seen that God would "have all men to be saved" (ver. 4); for to the Christians of that day, the dispensation under which they lived must have appeared to be chiefly, if not exclusively, for the salvation of the

Elect. That Scripture is *progressive*, and that particular truths are, though revealed, *hidden*, so to speak, for a time—*reserved* for particular periods of the Church's history, can scarcely be denied by any thoughtful reader of the Bible.

The summing up of Dean Ellicott is briefly this:—That as the restitution, like the reconciliation, is *in Christ*, "everything which, from the nature of things, and the truceless opposition between light and darkness, between sin and holiness, cannot without blasphemy be conceived of as 'in Him,' or in union with Him, will in the end be only as the dross and scum that is purged off by the refining and sublimating flame."

"We cannot and dare not," adds the Dean, "close our eyes to limitations which the very terms of these profound revelations distinctly pre-suppose, and which the whole analogy of Scripture forbids us to deny. If, on the one hand, restitution is in Christ and in Him alone; if, on the other, there be such a state as the second death, and one sin, *at least*, for which there is to be no remission,—then, to assert that apostate angels in the abyss, and the seed of the serpent among men, shall share in the blessings of the restitution, is practically to make a mock at the express declarations of the Word of God. This much we may dare to say, but no more than this; that all, that from its union with the Saviour *is saveable*, shall be saved; all, that from being one with the Restorer is *capable of restoration*, shall be restored."

From the question, what conditions of men may be regarded as *saveable*? in other words, what are the

precise limitations laid down in the Bible, beyond which redemption cannot extend? whether, for instance, the nations that have never heard of Christ, can in any world or *in any sense*, by virtue of His atoning sacrifice, ever be brought into such a union with the Redeemer as shall save them from eternal perdition,—the Dean evidently shrinks. He seems to prefer vague generalities of expression, which every man may interpret as he will, such as these:—"*How*, and in what precise way, the restoring power of reconciling love shall work out its issues, has not been expressly revealed." "Perchance, after the purging fires have burnt away from the material earth all the seeds of sin which the flood could not wash away, there may come forth out of its productive bosom races of living creatures, that, in all their instincts, capabilities, and existences, may ceaselessly glorify the Creative Wisdom. Perchance, grass and flower and tree may again clothe the renovated earth, and, in all their developments and through all their changes, may so reflect the restoring power of their Maker, that they, too, may be permitted to bear their part in creation's new and universal hymn."

He tells us that he has "shrunk from flinging broadcast denunciations of eternal wrath, while meditating on counsels of eternal mercy;" that he has "shuddered at pronouncing avenues of mercy irrevocably closed, which a just deduction from the Word of God leads us to believe are yet open;" but he has nowhere directly stated *what* or *how wide* he considers these avenues to be.

A.

APOSTOLIC PREACHING.

(FOURTH PAPER.)

ON taking up the Gospel of John, we are at once struck by observing *how much more* is recorded in it, respecting both our Lord's teaching and that of His forerunner, than can, by any possibility, be gathered from the other Evangelists.

It is here that we learn, for the first time, that the Baptist proclaimed Jesus, not merely as Messiah, but as "*the Lamb of God* which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29); a character, in which the Apostles themselves, even to the end of His earthly ministry, seem to have been all but incapable of recognizing Him. It is here that we become acquainted with the fact, that the ministry of the forerunner extended not only to witnessing to *the Divine character* of Christ, but also to the necessity of *faith in Him*, as the only Saviour; for it is of Him he speaks, when he says,—"He that cometh from heaven is above all"—God "giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him"—"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand"—"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John iii. 27—36).

In these teachings, the Baptist would almost seem to have anticipated Pentecost; for he evidently indicates a much deeper acquaintance with the true character of the Redeemer than, to the last, *they* had, who accompanied the Lord for years, and were daily listening to His voice.

Again, in the other Evangelists, with the exception of one incident (Luke iv. 25—30), we have scarcely an allusion to Divine sovereignty in grace, or to the calling of an elect people; in John, on the contrary, the doctrine breaks forth continually, as a leading principle in the Divine dealings with men. Here it is for the first time we learn that Christ had said, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me" (vi. 37); "Of all which He hath given me I shall lose nothing" (ver. 39); "No man can come to me except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him" (ver. 44); "It is written in the Prophets, And they shall be all taught of God" (ver. 45); "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish" (x. 27); "I and my Father are one" (ver. 30); "I know whom I have chosen" (xiii. 18); "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you" (xv. 16); "That He should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given Him" (xvii. 2); "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine" (ver. 9); "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am" (ver. 24); "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee; but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me" (ver. 25).

These texts are taken precisely as they stand in the Gospel. They are not human *inferences* deduced from Divine statements, but the direct words of the Master Himself, and if they do not plainly teach the doctrine of an Election of grace, it is difficult to see in what words it could be taught.

Yet nothing appears that *narrows* the offer of the Gospel to the Elect only; or that even implies that *they alone* will

ever practically benefit by its blessings; on the contrary, in this same Gospel, Christ is spoken of as "*the Light* which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (i. 9); and "*the Lamb* which taketh away *the sin of the world*" (i. 29). Condemnation is declared to be the consequence of *rejection* of light, *from the worst of motives*,—the love of darkness, and of evil (iii. 19). They who shall come forth to the resurrection of life are they that "*have done good;*" and they who rise for condemnation are they who have "*done evil*,"—all implying the strictest retribution, with *degree* both of reward and punishment (v. 29). They who have everlasting life, are they who *see* the Son, and believe on Him (vi. 40); the *blind*, who are such not wilfully, but for want of opportunity to see, "*have no sin*" (ix. 41). Even of haters and persecutors the Lord says, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin" (xv. 22).

And now, where do we find the doctrine of Reprobation, or anything akin to it? Where do we find anything approaching to a declaration that all, but the Elect, are lost for ever, and doomed to eternal misery? Where do we find a justification for the strange inference of the Assembly of Divines, that God "hath passed by, and *fore-ordained the rest* (*i. e.*, all not Elect) to wrath, to be for their sin inflicted, to the praise of the glory of His justice" (Cat., Q. 13)? and further, that "they who, *having never heard the Gospel*, know not Jesus Christ, *cannot be saved*, be they ever so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature" (Cat., Q. 60)? Where, we ask, is authority to be found for statements like these? Literally—No Where! Yet, such is the miserable result of subjecting infinite thought to finite logic,—Divine words to human inferences,—that tens of thousands of the holiest of men

that ever lived, have bowed and wept before these vile abstractions, and all but doubted the love of their heavenly Father, from not perceiving the grossness of this misrepresentation of His character.*

But to return to the Evangelist. Other truths, not less important than that of Election, and apparently all but

* It is the fashion, in many quarters, to speak of these views as now obsolete. Who, it is said, *now* believes in the doctrine of Reprobation? What would be said, if we were to change the form of the question, and to put it thus,—Who now believes in the teaching of the Assembly's Catechism? Would not every man of the thousands who, in one form or other, have publicly and solemnly professed their adherence to it, rise up in anger at such a question being put, and regard it as an insult? If this doctrine of Reprobation be not held, what hinders,—we will not say the Established Church of Scotland, for it is under law,—but the Free Church, or the various seceding bodies of Presbyterians, from disowning such teaching, as dishonouring to God and injurious to man?

The truth must be spoken. It *is* believed, and it influences, to no slight extent, the popular theology, both of Scotland and of America, at this day. The best evidence we can furnish, probably, of this fact, is to refer those who doubt, to the recently published works of Dr. Leonard Woods, late Professor of Christian Theology in the Theological Seminary, Andover, U.S. (Dr. Woods retired from Andover in 1849), and especially to Lect. xxxviii., on "the purpose or decree of God as to the Reprobation of sinners." He there calls Reprobation "the counterpart of Election," and ranks it, without the slightest authority, among those things in Paul's Epistles to which Peter alludes, and which he says are hard to be understood. He takes for granted, all through his lecture, that Reprobation is *a necessary inference* from the doctrine of Election, and then labours to justify God, in creating the great mass of mankind for eternal misery. He quotes the Westminster Assembly's Confession of Faith, as justifying the view he has taken. Scripture is scarcely noticed throughout. So, as we have said elsewhere, do men first misrepresent their heavenly Father, and then think they justify Him, when they are, in reality, only justifying their own mistakes.

unknown to the writers of the three first Gospels, here open to us in this of John. Here it is we first learn that the doctrine of regeneration, or the new birth, was taught by Christ (iii. 3),—not indeed as a new truth, but as involved in the Law and the Prophets (iii. 10; vi. 45). Here, for the first time, we perceive that at a very early period of His ministry, Jesus spake of His sacrificial death *as certain*, and as necessary for the salvation of the world (iii. 14—17); of faith in Himself as securing a *present* deliverance from condemnation (iii. 18; v. 24); of the necessity of *living upon* Him as the bread from heaven (vi. 32—66); and of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of all that believe (v. 16; vii. 37—39; xiv., xv.)

Of all these things, and of much beside, such as that wonderful prophecy of Caiaphas (a second Balaam) that it was "expedient that one should die for the people" (xi. 52), should we have been in ignorance but for the testimony of St. John,—an eye-witness of that which he records, and one who seems, in the production of this Gospel, specially to have enjoyed the aid of "the Comforter" in bringing all things to his remembrance, whatsoever Christ had spoken.

In relation, however, to APOSTOLIC PREACHING,—to the means by which conviction of sin, and the consequent need of salvation, was sought to be produced in the minds of unbelievers, we learn nothing more than we can gather from the other Evangelists. L.

(To be continued.)

RELIGIOUS MATERIALISM.

We suppose it will be generally admitted, that the Churches of the Reformation *all hold* that, in one form or other, spiritual blessings, more or less important, flow to man *in connection with*, if not in consequence of, certain material acts, such as the application of water in Baptism, the eating of bread and drinking of wine in the communion of the Lord's Supper, and the laying on of hands in Ordination.

Hence, few Christians regard one unbaptized, either in infancy or in later life, as *in covenant* with God; fewer still would admit that the Lord's Supper can be received profitably without the intervention of an ordained minister; while, on the question of ordination, amid conflicting opinions on many points, almost all hold that the setting apart by imposition of hands, either of the bishop, the presbytery, or of other ministers, is essential to the right performance of the duties involved in the work of the Christian ministry.

It is surely important to ascertain how far these views are sustained by the authority of Scripture.

The question at issue is not one of mere order, but vital: it is one that touches the inmost depths of the spiritual life. It involves the inquiry, "Has God associated certain spiritual blessings with certain material acts, or has He not?" Is it, or is it not true,—however inexplicable or mysterious to us,—that, *as a fact*, He has connected, in some sense or other, the regeneration of man or child with

the administration of water in baptism; the sustentation of the believer with the eating of bread and drinking of wine in the Lord's Supper; and the authority to preach, and to administer sacraments, with the rite of ordination?

The simple question is, "Has God associated with the reception of sacraments certain special blessings which cannot be received in any other way? Is there *any connection whatever* between outward signs and inward graces? between the eating of the bread, for instance, and the drinking of the wine, in the Lord's Supper, and the flowing forth of special grace to the believing recipient? Is the rite of ordination, or are the symbols in the sacraments, in any peculiar way, vehicles of heavenly benediction? *That* is the question; and it is a very important one.

In seeking an answer, the first thing to be ascertained is,—since this, in fact, involves everything else,—whether or no there is anything to be found in Scripture which should lead us to suppose that God *ever has*, or ever will make any material substance *a vehicle of grace?*

Mr. Alexander Knox, of Dublin, by far the ablest expounder of the high sacramentarian theory, insists that *there is*. We propose, therefore, at once to examine the instances he quotes, and to dispose of them as we proceed.

The first he mentions is "the tree of life in Eden." Here, he says, at the very outset we have an instance of the communication of a spiritual thing, *life*, through a material vehicle. But is it so? The "tree of life" only *sustained* physical existence. It was lest our first parents should eat of it, and so live for ever in their depraved and miserable condition, that God mercifully excluded them from its neighbourhood. The "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" would be more in point; but then it will scarcely be maintained

that any spiritual good flowed from that act of signal disobedience, which alone made man acquainted with its properties.

"The rod of Moses," with which he miraculously divided the waters of the Red Sea, is next brought forward; but this is equally inapplicable; for it assuredly conveyed no *spiritual* benefit to any one, being simply a medium of miraculous power.

"The pillar of cloud and of fire," the "ark of the covenant," and the "Shekinah" on the mercy-seat, although outward manifestations of the God of Israel Himself, were not *conduits of grace* to the stiff-necked generation that beheld them. Nor did "the mantle of Elijah" clothe his successor with any power beyond that of working miracles; an endowment which is never confounded in Scripture with the possession of piety.

Reference has sometimes been made, in support of sacramentarian theories, to the Israelites having been baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; to their eating the same spiritual meat, and drinking the same spiritual drink; but these instances all fail, for the reasons already advanced, since no *moral or spiritual* benefit whatever was communicated to the people in the passage over the Red Sea; no grace accompanied the eating of the manna; nor was any soul renewed by drinking of the water that followed the Lord's host, although that water was *figuratively* Christ.

But we turn to the facts of the New Testament. Christ worked miracles, it is true, not unfrequently through a material agency. In one instance He made spittle, and anointed the eyes of a blind man; in another, virtue went out of Him by one touching the hem of His garment; in most cases, He *laid His hands* on the sick and they recovered. Yet in no one instance did He confer, in this

way, anything beyond material and temporal good. The words, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee" (Matt. ix. 2), as uttered by our Lord to the man sick of the palsy, may seem, at first sight, to indicate an exception; but it is not really so, for they had no reference to the *spiritual* condition of the sufferer. They related simply to the removal of *special consequences of disobedience* to the laws of the theocracy under which the man lived.

One case, however, still remains, which is regarded as an indisputable instance in which Christ communicated inward and spiritual grace through an outward sign and a corporeal medium. It is that recorded by St. John in these words, "He breathed on them, and saith unto them, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." *Here*, it has been said, there is at least no room for doubt that our Lord has connected the outward sign with the inward grace; for "now the Apostles first became animated with spiritual life; now they became *new creatures*. How else shall we account for their subsequent clearer apprehensions of the New Dispensation, or explain their possession of the power to confer and to transmit the same blessing to others?"

We submit, as an answer to the question, first of all, that it is not true that the Apostles *at this time* obtained clearer views of the New Testament dispensation; still less that they became new creatures; for it is *after this time* that we find them,—still under the influence of Jewish expectation,—asking, "Lord, wilt thou, at this time, restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts i. 6). And, still later, we hear two of them, on the way to Emmaus, under the influence of ignorance and despondency, mournfully exclaiming, "We thought

that this had been He that should have redeemed Israel," implying that the expectation had now been abandoned.

The fact is, that, until the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the Apostles, like the other disciples, remained to a very great extent in the darkness of Judaism. As for the act of "breathing"—the corporeal medium—there is nothing whatever to show that it conveyed any power beyond that of inflicting or remitting punishments of a judicial character.

The Apostles, it has been maintained, could not fail to regard the material medium as all-important in the institution of the Eucharist, for the discourse of our Lord, as given in the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel, would be present to their minds; and His words on the one occasion would, of course, and naturally, be explained by what He had spoken on the other.

We reply confidently, that the effect produced by the recollection of the words in question, would be directly the reverse of that which has been supposed; for it would almost of necessity lead them to interpret our Lord's expressions in instituting the Supper figuratively and spiritually; since, on the occasion referred to, He told them distinctly that His words were not carnal, but "spirit and life." Having *never seen or heard* of a spiritual blessing being conveyed through a material medium; knowing that no instance of the kind was to be found in the Scriptures of the Old Dispensation, they would never dream that so low a notion could enter the heart of a renewed man.

Experience would very soon have corrected such an error, had it ever been entertained; for they must speedily have found out how powerless they were in relation to spiritual things. Paul, and Peter also, could punish disobedience with sickness or death; they could confer miraculous gifts

of healing to a wonderful extent; but they could not "shed abroad" in any human heart the love of God. They could "sow in tears," believing that one day they would "reap in joy;" but they had no remedy for human perversity, save that which is common to us all,—prayer and patience.

Much has been said and written on the *expressiveness* of the Eucharist, when regarded as the agency through which the Christian dwells in Christ, and Christ in him; living by His life, as the branches of the vine live by *actual material contact* with the root. Without such an interpretation, the rite has been spoken of as unmeaning.

The reply is obvious. All such reasoning ignores the gift of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter,—the most precious donation of the risen Lord to His redeemed children; a gift which, it should never be forgotten, was *not* imparted while the Apostles were "breaking bread," but while they were in prayer; a gift which is in no part of Scripture associated with the partaking of the Lord's Supper; and the impartation of which to the disciples generally was accompanied by no outward or material sign.*

Again, because St. Paul urges on the Corinthians the inconsistency of the same man being a partaker of idol feasts and of the Christian feast, it has been argued that *actual participation* is plainly supposed, and a "mysterious sanctity" clearly thrown around the Eucharistic elements.

But who, we should like to know, really supposes that by the table or cup of demons, was meant any mysterious *actual eating* of the body or drinking the blood of Satan? Nothing can be clearer than that *spiritual* sympathy and fellowship with the Evil One was alone intended; and if

* The "tongues of fire" were symbols, not of grace, but of gifts,—a gift affecting the brain and the organs of speech, but not the heart.

this was the meaning of the Apostle when he speaks of the table of demons, why should a different sense be given to his words when he contrasts the demon table with the table of the Lord.

St. Paul indeed says, "The cup of blessing which *we* bless;" but who, not under the influence of a pre-conceived theory, would imagine that these simple words "distinctly specify the mysterious character and efficacy which the material elements of bread and wine acquire *by their consecration* to the holy purposes for which they were appointed?" What is there to support so strange a supposition? St. Paul goes on to say, "*We*, being many, are one bread;" in the one case, as in the other, he is speaking not of himself alone, but of all the believers. There is not the least evidence to show that the Apostle's words imply any consecration whatever, "blessing and breaking" food being the ordinary practice of devout men at all times.

Finally, it has been urged, that the *same kind of sanctity* which was ascribed to things offered on God's altar under the old law, must evidently have been ascribed to the Eucharistic symbols, since disease and other bodily inflictions followed the crime of eating and drinking unworthily.

This view is clearly recognized in the different warnings read in the Episcopal Church against an improper approach to the Table. In one of these, the communicant is bidden to repent of sin before he draws nigh, "lest, after the taking of that Holy Sacrament, the devil enter into him as he entered into Judas;" and in another, "lest he provoke God to plague him with divers diseases and sundry kinds of death." If, says Mr. Knox, the sacred symbols be thus endued with a supernatural influence to avenge their abuse,

they *must* assuredly possess a like supernatural influence to benefit and bless.

If, indeed;—for who does not know that the diseases and deaths in question were direct inflictions of the Apostles, in the exercise of that miraculous system of Ecclesiastical government, under which the Christian Church was planted in the earth? Who does not know that these inflictions were, for the most part, *temporary;*—that no one but an Apostle had power, *in this way*, either to punish or to forgive; and that none of these diseases and judicial deaths have ever been witnessed since miracles ceased?*

What more is needed to show that avenging elements are *not inherent* in the sacred symbols; for, had they been so, they would, without doubt, have continued to this day.

Mr. Knox quotes Doddridge in support of the assertion

* It is not difficult to determine *when* miracles ceased. Among those who were "scattered abroad" by the persecution which arose after the death of Stephen, was Philip, who went to Samaria, where he preached Christ with great effect, and worked many miracles. Whether he had been one of the hundred and twenty in the upper room, on whom the Spirit had descended, or whether he had received the power to work miracles by the hands of one of the Apostles, is not stated; but it is plain he had *no ability to impart* such power to others; for it was not till Peter and John went down, that, through their agency, those wondrous gifts were bestowed, which excited the cupidity of Simon the sorcerer. It is obvious, therefore, that miraculous powers were enjoyed *only by those* to whom the Apostles *personally* imparted them; they could not be transferred, so to speak, to a third generation; they must, then, have ceased at the death of men who, having lived during some portion of the lifetime of the Apostles, had received from them personally the Divine gift. Ecclesiastical history, fairly read, coincides with this view. Beyond such a period, we have no trustworthy evidence of miracles being worked in the Church anywhere.

that *where the instrumental efficacy of the sacramental symbols is excluded*, the ordinance loses its attractions. But this, too, is contrary to fact, at least in our own day, for no class of persons "break bread" so frequently, or attach a deeper meaning to the rite, than those who regard it simply as commemorating the dying love of their Redeemer; as symbolizing the reality of their life in Him; and as showing forth the oneness which exists between the Saviour and all His true followers.

But what, it will be said, on this showing, becomes of such phrases as being "*born of water*, and of the Spirit"? Are these, and similar passages, to be stript of all meaning, in order that Sacramentarian theories may be demolished?

By no means. Let them have their full weight, whatever it may be; only let us take care that the import given to them be that which is plain and scriptural.

The phrase "born of water," as we have already shown, was an ordinary Jewish one. Every proselyte was represented as *newly born*, or born of water, in his baptism. It was the outward sign by which his proselytism was recognized.* But it never signified more. It was never supposed to imply any internal or spiritual change, excepting in so far as such change might be supposed by the convert's profession of Judaism. The words under consideration occur in our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus, when he came secretly and by night to confess his faith. What more natural or appropriate, than that

* "If any one become a proselyte, he is like a child new born" (Jevamoth, fol. 62, 1; 92, 1). "The Gentile that is made a proselyte, and the servant that is made free, behold, he is like a child new born" (Maimonides, Issure Beah, c. 14. See Lightfoot, vol. xii. p. 255. Quoted from Halley on the Sacraments, p. 146).

Christ should tell this ruler and rabbi that secret discipleship could not be accepted. He must, like others, dare the ignominy of a public profession, and be born, not of the Spirit only, but *of water*. What more natural, than that Nicodemus should stumble at the very idea of being placed on a level with a heathen proselyte? To *Christian* baptism the words could not refer, for no such ordinance as yet existed. The baptism referred to was that of our Lord and His disciples, which was like that of John.

The "washing of regeneration," referred to in the Epistle to Titus (iii. 5), is but another mode of expressing the same idea. *Both* passages are parallel to the expression of St. Paul in the Romans, "If thou shalt *confess with thy mouth*" the Lord Jesus, "thou shalt be saved."

But we have already dealt with the question of baptism. What we maintain is, that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper,—if it must be so called,—when viewed in the light of Scripture alone, is neither more nor less than a *symbolic representation* of a great truth, an earthly sign of heavenly things. As such, it is to be honoured and observed, not indeed on account of any mysterious sanctity that may be supposed to attach to it, but simply and solely on account of the truth it enshrines, and the love it embodies.

E.

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints—as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine.*

BRITISH MUSEUM

FORECASTINGS.

THE close of the present year, if we should live to see it, will complete the third volume of the Interpreter. When that period arrives we propose to *suspend* the publication for an indefinite term.

We say suspend, rather than discontinue, because it is not improbable that it may be revived at some future day, as the organ of a practical movement in favour of the principles it has advocated.

K

[Registered for transmission abroad.]

During the suspension of the Periodical, the papers that have appeared in it will be published in varied forms, and with additions, as distinct volumes of an "Interpreter Series."

The *first*, entitled "The Study of the Bible," has been out for some months, and is now, probably to some extent, in the hands of our readers.

The *second*, on "The Destiny of the Human Race," is now in the press; and the *third*, on "Church and Church Matters," will follow in due course.

We are not much concerned as to what may be the popularity or otherwise of these volumes. Archbishop Whately, among the many good and true things that he has said in his time, never said a truer than when he observed, that "the readiest and warmest approbation an author meets with will usually be from those whom he has *not* convinced, because they were convinced already. And the effect, the most important and the most difficult to be produced, he will usually, when he does produce it, *hear the least of*. Those whom he may have induced to re-consider, and gradually to alter, previously fixed opinions, are not likely, for a time at least, to be very forward in proclaiming the change. If there could be a book (on moral or religious subjects) which every one thought very convincing, this would be a sign that it had convinced nobody."

The INTERPRETER will be suspended under the persuasion that, *after a sowing time*, rest is needful,

in order to allow opportunity for the seed to quicken, and the crop, if a harvest should be granted, to mature.

In what form this harvest may spring up, if it ever appears, is as yet uncertain. *Our* work, if God has given us a work at all, is simply that of "the Baptist," to utter a voice,—"a sound that, as soon as it has expressed the thought of which it is the sign, dies into air and is known no more." The rest will follow in due course, and in its own time. When the hour strikes, it will be seen that God is at no loss for agents to carry on whatever He may design.

Our own impression is, that at present, and perhaps for some years to come, the only practical work that can be performed will be one of a *preparatory* character. It may probably consist of little more than *individual* endeavours to enlighten others. Yet not even this will be accomplished *without suffering;* without those who attempt it having to bear the opposition of the selfish, and, what is far worse, the alienation of many among the good. It will not be possible even for two or three to meet together to study the Scriptures *without reproach,* unless they do so under the influence of the traditions of the Church to which they may belong. Objections are sure to be made if such associations venture to investigate freely the bearing of Divine revelation on the final destiny of the race, or to trace the history and consequences of sacramentarian theories,—of ecclesiastical pretensions, and of theological exaggerations. They will not be

allowed *peacefully* to teach, no matter how quietly and unobtrusively, how, in all ages, the exaltation of the human creed has been accompanied by the depression of the Divine life; how *worthless* light is without love; or how desirable it is to testify for truth *without separation from the communion* of those with whom we may differ.

Such a course of procedure is, at present, but little understood. If conclusions are arrived at, materially differing from those which prevail in the denomination to which the inquirers belong, *secession* will be recommended, if not enforced, lest the new opinion should spread within its borders; while, on the other hand, this same secession will be urged as a duty by the many, who fancy that a testimony cannot be completed unless it severs them from their brethren.

To *withstand* these influences, no small share of moral courage is required. To *remain* in a Christian body, after unmistakable indications that our separation from it is desired; to do so without irritating others, yet with a steady and unflinching determination to *propagate*, in a quiet and loving temper, what we believe to be truth, is only possible by the aid of that blessed Spirit whose "fruits" are "love, joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost." *Yet it is essential to success.*

The fact that passive resistance, if not active opposition, will come from quarters where it ought least to be expected, must neither sour nor dishearten. Whatever may be the explanation, it may be regarded as unquestionable, that Nonconformists of all schools

—of course with many bright exceptions—are far more *bound* by their traditions than the members of Established Churches; they are more jealous of their ecclesiastical standing, such as it is, than other men; and they are less accessible to reason in relation to any doctrine which they have been accustomed to hold or to reject, or even to the extension of their own principles *beyond the boundary* fixed for their operation.

We have, ourselves, been assailed again and again by all parties. "Brethren" have *denounced* us for discouraging secession; Congregationalists, for advocating what they call "Brethrenism." To hold a principle, without seeking to form a clique for its support, or running to an existing party for sympathy, seems to most men inexplicable. But no charge of individualism or Ishmaelism, however repeated, can *really* excuse any man from the obligation to do what he believes to be right, or to plant his foot wherever he thinks he discerns the imprint of his Lord's.

That "Brethrenism," *as it now is*, has been a wretched mistake, is at present generally allowed; but as the causes of failure are commonly quite misconceived, it may be advisable to review them, *by way of warning.*

It is not, perhaps, generally known that this movement commenced in Dublin in the year 1829, with a few devoted men, who were then and there pursuing a course of study preparatory to taking orders in the English Church.

These excellent persons were accustomed frequently to meet for prayer and reading the Word. On one occasion the conversation turned on the lawfulness, or otherwise, of believers in Christ "breaking bread" together in His name, without the intervention of a clergyman, or the agency of an organized Church. The point was examined by each, and finally decided in the affirmative, after which the practice was adopted by the little company.

In an evil hour, as it appears to us, they were joined by two or three clergymen, still officiating in the Church of England, and these men soon became the leaders and the destroyers of the work. They imported into it their theology, their exclusive spirit, their asceticism, and their prophetic dreams; they seceded themselves, and then encouraged others to secede also, and to become *their followers*. Under the mistaken notion that it was a duty to testify, both by condemnation and separation, against all who differed from them, the body soon became sectarian, bitter, self-satisfied, and unamiable; internal dissensions (apparently judicial in character) rapidly followed, and the spirit of "judgment" took the place of the spirit of love. Nor was this all. Adopting traditionally the very same views relating to the operation of the Spirit of God *on the mind*, which had led Basil and other "Fathers" to speak of it as a sort of personal inspiration, or, as he called it, "an intellectual light, affording illumination to every rational faculty in the investigation of truth,—the light which clears *mental*

perplexities," they claimed this Divine gift for their leaders, followed them blindly into all kinds of error, and too often became, *individually,* dogmatic, impatient of contradiction, and spiritually proud.

Everything was now changed. *Originally* they had met simply "for the enjoyment of union and communion among all who possessed the *common life* of the family of God;" *now,* they had become in their own eyes *the* Church, and in the eyes of all others a sect, distinguished only by their narrowness, extravagance, and fanciful interpretations of Scripture.

The following almost prophetic warning was given to the Brethren as early as 1836, by Mr. Groves, one of the little company who had first met in Dublin; but it was unhappily disregarded.

"I wish you," he says, "to feel assured that nothing has estranged my heart from you, or lowered my confidence in your being still animated by the same enlarged and generous purposes that once so won and riveted me; and though I feel you have departed from those principles by which you once hoped to have effected them, still my soul so reposes in the truth of your heart to God, that I feel it needs but a step or two more to advance, and *you will see all the evils of the systems from which you profess to be separated, spring up among yourselves.*

"Your union will daily become *one of doctrines and opinions,* more than of life and love; your government—unseen, perhaps, and unexpressed—will soon be *one wherein is overwhelmingly felt the*

authority of men; you will be known more by what you witness against, than by what you witness for; and, practically, this will prove that you witness against all but yourselves."

"The position which this occupying of the Seat of Judgment will place you in, will be this: *the most narrow-minded and bigoted will rule,* because his conscience cannot and will not give way, and therefore *the more enlarged heart must yield.* Light, not life, will then be the measure of communion; and being 'one of us' will become a stronger band than oneness in the power of the life of God in the soul."

His concluding remarks are worthy the attention of all testifiers, by whatsoever name they may be called. "Whilst we occupy the place of only witnessing against those things *which are recognized by other Christians as evil,* we make men judges of themselves, and *of themselves* they are condemned. At the same time we conciliate their heavenly affections by allowing and recognizing all that is really of the Lord, and *sharing in it,* though *the system* in which these golden grains are found *we may utterly disapprove.*

"But the moment our position and language imply a perfect separation alike from the evil and the good, we no longer have their consciences with us. They feel that though only a brother in a father's house, we exercise more than a father's power, without a father's heart of mercy; and they therefore appeal from us to our common Head, both in behalf of themselves and their system."

Had these Reformers of thirty years ago only abided by principles of this character; had they been able to see that sectarianism invariably follows secession; that a Church founded on theological agreement, rather than on the possession of the Divine life, inevitably becomes exclusive and unlovely; had they allowed for the tendency of the human mind, when unoccupied by practical work, to fall back upon doctrines, and to feed on differences in themselves unimportant; and had they guarded themselves against these evils, by exalting life above light, and love above opinions, and above all by keeping to *small groups*, and associating with each group a work worthy of its attention, and adapted to its capacities,—they would have laid the foundation of a Church, the noblest and the best that the world has seen since the days of the Apostles; A CHURCH, simply and purely LAY in its constitution; supplementary to all existing organizations, but not subservient to any; without a corporate existence, and without property of any kind; a Church which by this time would have proved the most effectual safeguard against the Romish tendencies of the age, and its inseparable companion, sceptical unbelief; a Church which would have furnished the only spontaneous and intelligent personal agency which can ever supersede hireling substitutes. *Is it vain* to try and profit by disappointment? *Is it idle* to imagine that the kind of Christian union once contemplated can ever be realized?

A.

APOSTOLIC PREACHING.

(*Continued and concluded.*)

IN the Acts of the Apostles we might naturally expect to find a plain and distinct answer to the question—"*How* did the *inspired* teachers of Christianity present their message to the world?" For the narrative commences with the day of Pentecost, and stretches through an entire generation; it brings before us all shades of character,—Jews, indifferent or persecuting; Christians, consistent and inconsistent, nominal and real; heathen, educated and ignorant, superstitious and sceptical; and with each of these we see truth, in Apostolic hands, directly in conflict.

The celebrated sermon of Peter, by means of which three thousand were added to the Church, first attracts our attention.

We observe that it embodies but one thought; and that is, *the condemnation* of his hearers. Jesus, he exclaims, *is* the Christ, and ye have crucified Him. The one thing with which they are charged is an act of direct and open sin. Conscience, quickened by the Divine Spirit, supports the accusation; they are pricked to the heart, and exclaim, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" The answer is brief and pointed; "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in (into) the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and *ye shall receive* the gift of the Holy Ghost." "With many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation;" but what those words were, we are not told.

The *second* address on record scarcely differs from the first. It is little more than a repetition of the charge—"Ye have killed the Prince of life," followed by an exhortation to repent of the iniquity. Again the appeal is successful, for "many of them which heard the word believed, the number being about five thousand" (Acts iii. and iv.).

The *third* discourse is to the Rulers, Elders, Scribes, and family of the High Priest. *Here*, Christ is exalted as the only Saviour, and the accusation is repeated,—"Ye crucified Him." But to these men the word is apparently of none effect; for it only calls forth the command not to speak at all nor to teach in the name of Jesus. The work, however, cannot be so stopped; for "believers" are the more "added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women" (v. 30—32).

The martyrdom of Stephen soon follows this great outgrowth; and now we have to notice the address he delivers to the council in the few awful moments preceding his execution. It is, superficially viewed, little more than a brief sketch of Jewish history; but its aim is single and precise. It is one continuous stream of accusation against the Jewish rulers, for having openly and flagrantly resisted the Holy Ghost; first by persecuting the Prophets, and finally by betraying and murdering "the Just One." The charge goes home and does its work, although the only effect it produces is exasperation and deepened hate.

The preaching of Philip in Samaria, and therefore, we may suppose, of all those who, in consequence of the persecution now raging at Jerusalem, were scattered abroad, consists, so far as we can gather, of information concerning "the kingdom of God," and the exaltation of Christ. In what precise form this was given, we are not told; but a

certain preparation of mind in the hearer is assumed,—for the speaker *builds* on those expectations of a coming kingdom, which, whether well or ill founded, were cherished both by the Jews and the Samaritans.

An incident occurs, in connection with these labours of Philip, which must not be unnoticed. Simon the sorcerer, a professed convert, indicates but too plainly that his heart is not right in the sight of God,—that he has, in fact, neither part nor lot in the matter. Peter severely rebukes him; but it is worthy of observation, that he deals exclusively with the particular act of wickedness he had committed, and bids him pray that the thought of his heart—the particular thought he had expressed—might be forgiven him (viii. 21, 22). So simple, apparently, and so unembarrassed, was the mode in which these early Evangelists preached the Gospel in the villages of Samaria (ver. 25).

The case of the Ethiopian eunuch scarcely bears on our inquiry, for he evidently was one whose heart God had opened before he met Philip. He had come up to Jerusalem to worship, and, moved no doubt by what he had heard there, was, when met, anxiously studying the prophecy of Isaiah, in order to ascertain whether or no Jesus was the Christ. Assisted by the exposition of his teacher, he is convinced, believes, and is baptized.

The conversion of Saul next comes before us; and here, too, it is surely worthy of notice, that the only sin with which he is charged is the plain and overt act in which he was then engaged,—that of persecution. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Nor do we hear of anything else till he receives his sight and is filled with the Holy Ghost. We may, indeed, if we think fit, *fancy*, as many do, that during the three days in which he remained without sight,

neither eating nor drinking, he was under deep distress on account of the sinfulness of his nature, and his consequent exposure to eternal misery; but he nowhere tells us that this was the case; and it is far more reasonable to suppose that he was meditating on prophecies with which he had long been familiar, and was then, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, *preparing* for the great work upon which he was about to enter; since we find him, immediately after, "confounding the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, and proving that this is very Christ."

Peter, in receiving Cornelius soon after this event, discovers that "God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him;" and he therefore teaches the Gentile, that Christ is ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead, and that whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins. In this case we are distinctly told that Cornelius had been specially prepared for the message; and Peter himself is, in this instance, at once the teacher and the taught.

The next address on record is that of Paul, in the synagogue at Antioch, in Pisidia. And this, we observe, differs materially from preceding discourses, inasmuch as it is not addressed to men who had been personally involved in the crucifixion of Christ, and it is not marked by the denunciation of any one particular sin. It consists of a simple *exhibition* of Christ as the only Saviour, with an assurance that through Him, those who heard might be justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses; and this discourse concludes with a *warning* from their own Prophets, as to the danger of perishing in their contempt (xiii. 16—41). The same doctrines are, on the

* *

following Sabbath day, preached to the Gentiles, and "as many as were ordained (set in order) *for* eternal life believed." In both cases *convictions* are supposed, of sufficient strength to call forth in some, blasphemy, and in others, faith.

At Lystra, Paul and Barnabas seem to come, for the first time, in direct collision with the prevailing idolatry; and it is well to mark how strictly in this case they confine themselves to that one sin, recognising its prevalence, condemning its folly, and witnessing for the one God, the living and the true.

The conversion of Lydia is unmarked by any apparently painful conviction of sin. She is one, we are told, "whose heart the Lord opened;" while the heart of the jailer, whose conversion immediately follows, seems to have been subdued amid the terrors of the earthquake, for it is there that he first awakes to the consciousness that the men he had been maltreating were the servants of the living God. He, too, believes, and is baptized.

At Thessalonica, the preaching of Paul for three consecutive Sabbath days evidently consisted of reasonings from the Old Testament Scriptures, intended to show that since *the humiliation and death* of Messiah was a clear subject of prophecy, the *rejection* of Christ by the Jews was a confirmation of his claims, rather than a reason for refusing to listen to them. At Berea, a similar course seems to have been pursued, and with the most favourable results.

At Athens, it is *idolatry* that stirs the spirit of this great missionary of the truth, and he disputes everywhere in favour of Jesus and the resurrection, in consequence of which he is led to Areopagus, and commanded to say what this new doctrine was. His sermon, if so it may be called,

is simply an exposition of the unreasonableness of idol-worship, and a declaration that the dead shall rise and be judged by Jesus Christ. The result is, some mock, and others ponder.

At Corinth, similar reasonings and persuasions, although continued for nearly two years, only cause the Jews to blaspheme the more, while many of the heathen hear, believe, and are baptized.

At Ephesus, Apollos appears, of whom it is said, that he "mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ." Here Paul continues for nearly three years more, disputing and persuading "concerning the kingdom of God. Publicly, and from house to house, he testified both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (xx. 21);—in every case, so far as we can perceive, recognizing the possession by his hearers of *everything* requisite to enable them to comprehend, and to estimate the importance of the message. Before Felix, he reasons of "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," as with one who was perfectly competent to understand the bearing of what he said, and who at length manifested that he did so by trembling at his word (xxiv. 25). To Agrippa, a man versed in Judaism, he speaks *as to a Jew*; and here, too, his word finds a witness in the exclamation of the king,—"Wouldest thou then persuade *me* to be a Christian"?

In going through THE EPISTLES, we shall follow the order in which they stand in the Authorized Version.

In relation to them all it will, of course, be admitted that they are addressed *to believers*, or at least to persons

regarded as such; to men who are commonly called, notwithstanding their follies and deficiencies, "elect," "saints," "holy brethren," and such like; for the apostolic writers seem always to *assume* a professed believer to be an "elect" man, until his conduct disproves his claim to the title, by showing that he is either a hypocrite, or self-deluded,—an unbeliever, or immoral.

The first Epistle, which follows the narratives in the Acts, is that to the ROMANS. It opens, as such a letter to a Church might be expected to do, with an expression of thanksgiving for the Gospel as "the power of God unto salvation (a *present* salvation from evil) to every one that believeth." It speaks of God as in the Gospel revealing two things—righteousness and wrath; the righteousness of the just, which is "from faith to faith;" and wrath for those who "hold the truth in unrighteousness" (i. 17, 18). The "indignation" is not against men who never heard of their heavenly Father, but against those *who do not like to retain God in their knowledge* (i. 28); men who, "*knowing the judgment of God*, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (ver. 32).

Such, the Apostle implies, were some of those to whom he wrote (ii. 17—24); and the "Gentiles who knew not the law" shall, he says, condemn them in the judgment" (ii. 14, 15). For, he adds, Jew and Gentile shall alike stand before God, and be judged according to their circumstances. The Jew "that *doeth evil*" shall receive "tribulation and anguish." The heathen man "that *worketh good*" shall receive "glory, honour, and peace;" for "there is no respect of persons with God" (ver. 8—11). Nor will the fact of having sinned with or without (a written) law make

any difference. They that have "sinned without law" shall (apart from Christ's redeeming work) "perish without law;" and those that have "sinned in the law" (apart from the same Redeemer) "shall be judged" (*i.e.*, condemned) "by the law" (ver. 12, 13). *Both alike* are "under sin" (iii. 9); "every mouth," therefore, "may be stopped," for *all the world* has become "guilty before God" (ver. 19). And thus it is that "the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ," is manifested, being "*unto all* and *upon all* them that believe: for there is no difference" (ver. 22). "Unto" (*for the benefit of*) "all"—[*Alford*]; "upon" (over, "so as to be shed down on"—[*Alford*] "all that believe."*

Every man, without exception, is throughout the Epistle declared to be under sin, and needing a Saviour (iii. 9); but it is nowhere said that the blessings of the salvation brought to light in the Gospel cannot be extended to any who do not *here* know and love it. On the contrary, as Abraham and David were saved by One whose advent they only dimly foresaw (ch. iv.), so "Israel," though "disobedient and gainsaying," is not finally cast off; for there is *now* "an election of grace," and, at a more distant day, "all Israel shall be saved" (xi. 1—26).

Election is distinctly set forth as sovereign—based on the eternal counsels of God; for *before birth* it was decided,

* Dean Alford, while thus translating, adds, "still no difference in εἰς and ἐπὶ must be sought." Why then does he *find* it, rendering the one "for the benefit of all," and the other "over, so as to be down on, all"? The difference is obviously a very important one; for it indicates that "the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ," is *for the benefit* of the whole world, but *shed down*—personally enjoyed here—only by the believer.

that in the case of Esau and Jacob, the elder should serve the younger (ix. 12); but (as we know) Esau was not altogether excluded from a blessing, though he voluntarily threw away his birthright. To Moses God saith, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy," or rather, I will "show favour" to whom I will show favour (Exod. xxxiii. 19). But under what circumstances? It is when Moses prays, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory," that the Lord answers, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee;" and *it is in this connection*, and not as involving wrath, that it is added, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious," *i. e.*, I will show *special* favour to whom I will. Pharaoh's hardening is plainly but retributive justice, and the object of it is merciful, inasmuch as by that bad man's example, thus allowed to do his worst, the power and goodness of God as the Deliverer of Israel became more widely known throughout all the earth (ix. 17).

The *lesson* the Apostle draws from the whole is, that God has an absolute right to give or to withhold what He pleases from His creatures; that as on earth He makes one a prince and another a peasant,—ordains one man to high dignity and another man to menial service,—so, in the world to come, the same power of the potter over the clay will be as clearly manifested. He tells us, indeed, that God endures, or rather "*endured* with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath—(the impenitent Jewish nation—so Doddridge and others) fitted (ripe) for destruction" (Rom. ix. 22); but then he says elsewhere, as we are reminded by Peter, that this "longsuffering of God is salvation;" and the whole argument winds up with the assurance that even these, whose eyes have been "darkened that they may not see," have only stumbled "that through their fall salvation

might come to the Gentiles," *after which* they should again be brought in "as life from the dead" (xi. 8—15).

In the First Epistle to the CORINTHIANS (i. 22—31), the difficulty experienced by the Apostle in preaching the Gospel both to Jews and Greeks is fully stated. The one wanted him to be a wonder-worker; the other wished the doctrine he preached to be blended with, and subordinated to, the heathen philosophy of the day; the announcement of a *crucified* Saviour being to the one offensive, and to the other "folly." The only effect this perversity has upon him is, that it calls forth the declaration that God *has chosen His own;* that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him;" but not a syllable escapes him which would lead us to believe that he regarded all these objectors—even though the light of truth had been so clearly brought before them—as irretrievably lost.

Why must we assume that, because the Apostle says to his converts, "Be not deceived," the vicious "shall not inherit the kingdom of God," "though such were some of you" (vi. 9, 11), therefore *the world*, from which these men by Divine grace had been taken, can *never* in any other state be apprehended of Christ Jesus? If he tells the vain and would-be wise among them, that "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God," does that oblige us to conclude that the folly in question is *utterly irremediable?* If, warning against false teachers, he says, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed," are we obliged *therefore* to conclude that the curse of God rests for evermore on those who have never known His name, or had experience of His mercy? Such *inferences* are not unnatural to mortals, we grant; they are inferences

capable of being sustained by apparently sound argument, and close logical reasoning; but *they are not revealed truths.* They stand side by side with the well-known exclamation of the disciples, "Who then can be saved?" The answer of the Lord *to us*, as to them, is, "With man" (or, according to human reasonings) "this may be impossible, but with God all things are possible."

In the SECOND EPISTLE, mourning over the power of Jewish prejudice, Paul observes, "If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost" (iv. 3); but "lost," not by any decree of reprobation, as some would teach, but through that darkness of the understanding which is the consequence of sin, and which veils truth from those to whom it is addressed. Such rejecters of light can only be left to the righteous judgments of God, yet not without the recollection that a time is coming when this "veil," which still falls over all nations, shall be taken away.

The Epistle to the GALATIANS is full of anxieties for Judaizing believers, as those for whom the Apostle is travailing in birth (iv. 19); whom he longs to see bring forth the fruits of the Spirit (v. 22); and whom he warns against self-deception (vi. 7): but nothing is said of others.

The Epistle to the EPHESIANS is replete with exhortations to the higher life of the Christian; but the letter is exclusively addressed to those whom God had chosen, and called, and sanctified, *i.e.*, set apart for His service. The wrath of God is again denounced against the flagrantly vicious, who are called the "children of disobedience," or (as it reads in the margin) of unbelief; the persons referred to being professing Christians, "deceived with vain words" (v. 6), and deluded enough to imagine that the service of God might consist with the grossest immorality.

The destruction in flaming fire of the persecutors and hinderers of the Gospel at the Second Advent, is revealed to the THESSALONIANS (2 Ep. i. 9); but these persecutors are "disobedient" men, who will not obey the Gospel of Christ (i. 8).

TIMOTHY and TITUS are instructed, both as to their own personal conduct and how to deal with *the Churches* committed to their care. The work of the Evangelist also is fully recognized (2 Tim. iv. 1—5), and Timothy is exhorted to "preach the word;" to reprove, rebuke, and exhort; to watch, and to endure afflictions; and he is told elsewhere, that it is "a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation," that God, "the living God, is *the Saviour of all men*, and specially (in a peculiar sense) of those that believe." This doctrine Timothy is emphatically told to "*teach*" (1 Ep. iv. 9—11).

Various passages in the Epistle to the HEBREWS, which are commonly applied to the unconverted, are so obviously addressed to believers, *as such*, that it is needless to offer further evidence than a reference to the context. The same remark holds also in relation to similar passages in the Epistles of James, Peter, and John.

We have now carefully examined the only record we have of Apostolic teaching. It embraces, as we have already said, a period of about thirty years, during which an entire generation must have passed away. On the review, certain peculiarities come out—*we presume, for our instruction and guidance.*

The *first* is, that the salvation preached is always from sin, and never from hell.* It is in this character alone

* It may be said, that a statement like this needs a great deal of modification, since there are many passages in the New Testament

—that of a Saviour from evil—that Christ is ever set forth. Nor can we find a single instance in which any Apostolic preacher speaks *as if he believed* that all the unregenerate—the great mass of the living and breathing humanity by which he was surrounded—were on the brink of eternal perdition. A judgment to come is clearly and constantly brought forward, and a day of wrath too; but it is always spoken of as *strictly retributive*,—the day in which every man will receive "according to *his deeds*, whether they be good or bad." There is nothing whatever

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which clearly imply that the one involves the other,—that salvation is deliverance from death as well as from sin, from "wrath" as well as from evil,—that life eternal is invariably associated with belief in Christ, and condemnation and ruin with the rejection of His testimony. The texts quoted in support of this statement would probably be such as these:—Rom. v. 9, "Saved from *wrath* through him;" Rom. vi. 23, "The wages of sin is death; or Ephes. ii. 3, "Children of wrath, even as others," and similar passages which need not be quoted.

We admit, without question, that sin and sorrow are inseparable. But the fact remains. The salvation *preached* is always from sin, and never from hell; the reason probably being that while an appeal to *fear* might excite terror, or stimulate a selfish desire for mere safety, it could not make manifest the true nature of the bondage under which man groans, or lead him heartily to desire true holiness. This we believe to be the main reason why in Scripture Christ is never presented to the ungodly as a Saviour from *future* misery, but always from *present* sin. The text so often quoted from St. Paul, "Knowing therefore the *terror* of the Lord, we persuade men" (2 Cor. v. 11), is grossly mistranslated. It should be, "Living in the fear of God, we persuade men," &c. (See Alford.) When the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (x. 31), he is speaking to and of believers, preceding the warning by the declaration, "The Lord shall judge *His people*."

in Scripture to authorize the statement so often made, that all shades of criminality are now merged in one sin—that of unbelief.

In the Gospels, and from our Lord's own lips, hell is solemnly declared to be the portion of the hypocrite, and of the flagrantly wicked and impenitent; but it is never spoken of as a doom hanging over *mankind*. That the soul may be *lost*, is taught as plainly as words can express; but that men, *as such*, are all in Adam irretrievably ruined, and that, with the exception of the "little flock," *all* are hastening to unending sorrow, is never even suggested.

The masses, *then as now*, ignorant, coarse, careworn, insensible to Divine things,—indifferent to, rather than opposers of, truth, are always spoken of as those who are to be pitied, loved, and taught by those who have greater advantages; they are never regarded as persons to whom the sorrows of this world are but the prelude to the greater miseries of the world that is to come.

No Apostle ever appeals to *fear* as a motive to repentance; no one even *intensifies*, so to speak, the guilt or peril of sin by abstract dissertations on its nature and character, *or even by the grandeur of the sacrifice made for its remission*; no one dwells on its punishment as *infinite* because against an *infinite* God; no one speaks of the fall in Adam, or the consequent depravation of man's nature (fully as these things are taught), as *the cause* of condemnation. Nothing is brought forward *to convict* the sinner, beyond his own plain and actual transgressions. No one approaches the conclusion that mere morality, or what is commonly called secular virtue, is of no value in the sight of God. On the contrary, it is always, if sincere, though springing from but a dim and partial recognition of what is just and right,

accepted *for what it is worth*, and always accounted far better than open profligacy.

Everything *deeper* is left to be inculcated *after men have believed*. Then, and not till then, is it fitting they should learn the filthiness of the clay from which they have been cleansed, the depth of the pit from which they have been digged. Then, and not till then, are they supposed to be able to understand the true nature of sin, and its deep malignity; its opposition to God, and its root in their inmost being. For these "deep things" can only be *profitably* received by those who have been reconciled to God through Christ, and are prepared to estimate, through an ever-enlarging experience, the bitterness of evil and the beauties of holiness.

The Apostles, strange as it may appear to us, apparently know nothing of our modern modes of awakening and alarming the unconverted; their object never seems to have been to bring men to that *instant decision* for God which we deem essential; they never lead their hearers to suppose that by any sudden process,—akin to what we too exclusively regard as conversion,—they must pass at once from death unto life; they do not *so* present the doctrine of the new birth; they never appear to wish to make *a strong impression* on those they address; they never speak or act for immediate effect. On the contrary, though never cold, they are always calm and unexcited. They feel themselves to be neither more nor less than what their Master told them they should be,—*sowers of seed*. And so they pass on, dropping the grain here and there, as opportunity offers,—informing or reasoning, warning or rebuking, as the case may seem to require, but quietly leaving results in the hand of God, and willing to wait for harvest till the corn is ripe.

Anxiety, emotion, sighs, tears, and travail of soul, are all reserved for believers. The distress of St. Paul is not for the heathen world, but for Israel, *as Israel*, casting away her birthright; and when either he or the other Apostles weep, it is over the sins of those in whom Christ *ought* long ago to have been formed, "the hope of glory."

One other remark we cannot abstain from making, which is this: that nothing indicates that either St. Paul or the other Apostles, when preaching the Gospel either to Jews or heathen, ever prayed for, or *looked for*, anything akin to what we are accustomed to call *a special outpouring* of the Holy Spirit. None of them seem ever to have supposed that the Holy Spirit was given to, or withheld from, certain localities by any sovereign arrangement in the Divine purposes. On the contrary, they always regard the Spirit as *already given*, to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come, and they never anticipate as the result of their labours anything above and beyond the blessing which is always granted to faithful labour.

Neither the conversion of the three thousand, nor that of the subsequent two thousand, is ever spoken of by the Apostles as the consequence of a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The Pentecostal effusion, *according to Scripture*, takes place—first in the upper room (Acts ii. 1—4), and next at their meeting for prayer after their dismissal by the rulers (iv. 31). It surely might be well to consider whether our modern speech in relation to these events can be justified.

When Peter speaks of preaching the Gospel "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven" (1 Pet. i. 12), he simply means that what he teaches, he teaches as *an inspired man*. When St. Paul says his preaching was "in

demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor. ii. 4), he means the same thing,—the message was not his, but God's. The treasure is "in earthen vessels," that the excellency of the power may be of God" (2 Cor. iv. 7). But that power is "the Gospel of Christ, which *is* the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. i. 16). And whensoever and wheresoever that Gospel comes with *renewing force* upon the heart, it is because it is received not outwardly and in word only, but inwardly as the voice of the Holy Ghost (1 Thess. i. 5).

Nothing in Scripture, so far as we can see, supports the opinion imported from America, and now so prevalent, that a preacher is authorized to assert that the Spirit of God is at any given time moving over a town or city, and that, if suffered to depart, the day of grace will probably be gone for ever.

Can anything, then, justify the language of condemnation which some good men indulge in, when they perceive that all Christians do not feel as they do in reference to the unconverted, or think it right to adopt precisely the same methods in attempting to convince them of sin? Surely no man has a right to sit in judgment on any who humbly desire, as co-operators with the Holy Spirit, to follow the leadings of that Divine Monitor, rather than force a way for themselves amidst the thickets of prevailing worldliness! Surely the mere fact of a true and genuine conversion of sinners, under any given order of means or ministry, is not to be regarded *as proof* that this particular order, either of thought or of agency, is specially approved of God!

Never should it be forgotten that Romanists have always had their revivals and revivalist ministers, as well as Pro-

testants, and that *many* persons are, on such occasions, and by their means, *truly* and permanently converted to God. But this is no evidence that God *endorses* either the men or the means; it is no proof that special showers of the Holy Spirit are granted in answer to the prayers of the monk or priest who officiates on these occasions; nor is it evidence of anything beyond this, that *in all things*, whether they relate to this world or to the world to come,—in all excitements, whether mental or moral, political or ecclesiastical,—*deep and prolonged earnestness of purpose*, especially when accompanied by the kindly sympathy of an excited imagination, and manifested in eloquent speech or fervent prayer, *is a mighty power*, and as such never to be undervalued or despised.

But it is a power for evil as well as for good. It may, by the Divine blessing, send men to the Cross; or it may, through human infirmity, mislead them much, and herald crusades not much wiser than that of Peter the Hermit. It may bring children with penitential tears to a closer affiance with God in Christ than they had ever before known; or it may take them, as in the case of Savonarola and of multitudes of others, into regions of delusion and unreality,—of grievous suffering, and of premature profession.*

* *Savonarola.* "Another example of the religious revival was presented in the assemblages of the young, who associated themselves in religious fraternities, and styled themselves children of Christ, visiting houses, and begging their owners to abandon objects of vanity, and to forsake idle diversions. On some occasions as many as 8,000 children ascended galleries constructed for them in the dome of the cathedral (at Florence), to hear the sermons of Savonarola. Historians tell us that the decrease of vice, drunkenness, and sensuality was marked, and continued in Tuscany for upwards of thirty years. While the excite-

The power of sympathy is one of the deepest mysteries of our nature. Whoever has seen human beings collected together in masses, and watched the movements that pass over and sway them like the trees of the forest moving in the wind, will understand how easily, under such circumstances, a voice can find its way at the same instant to a thousand hearts, and this, even though the subject be of no real moment; but when the topic of discourse is Divine, when a sense of common misery and common corruption mingles with common yearnings after a higher life, who can wonder that the result is often inexplicably great? But again we say, all this *may* consist with the proclamation of much that is untrue, or at least greatly exaggerated. Faith in Christ, deep, heartfelt earnestness, and sincere love to souls, may be there too; but it is not easy on such occasions to separate the precious from the vile: for the *apparent triumph*, the crowd of listeners, the passion and the prostration, may be largely the mere effect of enthusiasm; and though impression may spread rapidly from man to man, it may be short-lived, and will in any case be worth little, except as it is followed by sound instruction, and all the influences of that MORAL AND SPIRITUAL EDUCATION by which it is the will of God to prepare His children for usefulness and happiness.

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ment lasted, schools and shops were closed when sermons were preached; the sound of hymns replaced licentious songs; the places of amusement were deserted, and the cathedral was thronged." Only two years later, these same multitudes saw, with a sort of satisfaction, the preacher they had so followed, led to torture and to death.

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty: and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints—as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine*.

BRITISH MUSEUM

THE LAY CHURCH.

OUR last paper, headed "Forecastings," closed with the expression of an opinion that, had "Brethrenism" not been accompanied by secession, it would have proved a great blessing to the world, and have become the nucleus of a Lay Church, *supplementary*, but neither subservient to, nor subversive of, existing ecclesiastical organizations.

We can easily imagine that by some, the mere

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suggestion of a lay Church will be regarded as mischievous; by others, as irreligious; by most, as extravagant in the last degree, if not absolutely inexplicable.

What, it will be said, is to be understood by such a phrase as "lay Church"? Had not the Apostolic Churches their bishops and deacons? Can anything justify departure from such a precedent, or any good man dare to separate what God has joined together? Has anything in the dealings of God with His people, any event in Providence—anything, *in fact*, occurred, which would lead us to believe that it is either permissible or prudent, or even practicable, to establish a Church without a clergy? Could such a Church be other than anarchical? Must it not, if successful, tend to root up and to destroy all existing ecclesiastical associations? Is it not then a mere blind, an unworthy delusion, to speak of such a Church as merely *supplementary*?

We shall endeavour to answer these questions as briefly as may be, and in a straightforward spirit.

We are asked, then, first of all, what is to be understood by the phrase "Lay Church"?

We reply, a previous question must be settled before we can give an answer, viz., "What is THE CHURCH?"

That the word *ecclesia* is used in the New Testament in different senses we all know. *Three* times it stands for a mere *assembly* of persons (Acts xix. 32—41); *once* for the body of the Israelites in the wilderness, where Moses is spoken of as "he that was

in *the Church* in the wilderness" (Acts vii. 38); *fifteen* times it indicates a particular society of Christians meeting either in one place or in different parts of a town or city (Acts xi. 22; 1 Cor. xvi. 19). Ordinarily (about *eighty-five* times) it denotes the entire body of professing Christians dwelling in any given city or district, in Judea or among the Gentiles. In these cases the plural (Churches) is often used (*e. g.*, Acts ix. 31; Rom. xvi. 4; 1 Cor. vii. 17). In all, however, the Church is regarded as an *outward or visible* thing. *Ten* times the word is used to indicate true and spiritual members, *as distinguished from* the hypocritical or self-deceived (Ephes. i. 22; iii. 10); Col. i. 18—24); and in these cases it is regarded as an *invisible* society.*

The ECCLESIASTICAL meaning of the phrase—at least among Protestants—cannot probably be better expressed than in the words of the 19th Article of the Church of England:—"The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same."

The *best*, because the most Scriptural definition of the Church that we have ever met with, and that by which we are most disposed to abide, will be found in "Expository Lectures on the Epistle to the

* "Study of the Bible:" *Simpkin, Marshall, & Co.* Chap. xxxv. One of the chapters which has not appeared in the *Interpreter*.

Corinthians," by the late Mr. Robertson, of Brighton. "What," asks that singularly gifted man, "is the Church? That question lies below all the theological differences of the day. The Church, according to the derivation of the word, means, the house of God.* *It is that body of men in whom the Spirit of God dwells as the source of their excellence, and who exist on earth for the purpose of exhibiting the Divine life, and the hidden order of humanity; to destroy evil, and to assimilate humanity to God; to penetrate and purify the world, and, as salt, preserve it from corruption.* It has an existence continuous throughout the ages; continuous, however, not on the principles of hereditary succession or human election, as in an ordinary corporation, but on the principle of spiritual similarity of character" (John i. 13).

Taking this, then, as our definition of "the Church," —a definition which leaves altogether out of sight, as mere accidents, the distinctions which now obtain between clergy and laity, and all questions of government,—it will not be difficult to perceive what we

* The derivation of the *English* word "Church," from the Greek κυριακον, which is literally, relating to the Lord, or *the Lord's*. This word is used to express *the Lord's* Supper (1 Cor. xi. 20), and *the Lord's* day (Rev. i. 10). From it we get the Saxon "kyrck," or "kyrch," the Scotch "kirk," and, as we have said, the English "church,"—all meaning *the Lord's house*.

"Kerche (*Ger.*), circe (*Sax.*), kirke (*Dan.*), kyrka (*Swed.*), cerkew (*Pol.*), kirk, church, all from τὸ κυριακον. The Gothic nations, receiving the Gospel from the Greeks, took most of their ecclesiastical words from the Greek tongue."—*Dr. Angus's "Christian Churches."*

mean by a *lay* Church as distinguished from existing Churches, which, however they may differ from one another, are all more or less *clerical*, being based alike on one principle,—"No bishop, no Church."

But this is not all. Every existing Church founds itself on *a creed*, expressed or understood, by adherence to which its property is secured. *Opinions* are avowedly the occasion of adherence or separation; and *discipline* has at least as much to do with orthodoxy as with character. Even the "Brethren,"—if they may be called a Church,—gather together on this basis. Their divisions and animosities, their willingness or unwillingness to sit down at the Lord's table with other Christians, turn entirely on approval or disapproval of certain opinions advanced by one of their leaders; and it is both curious and instructive to observe that these leaders have almost always been clerical,—that clergymen of the Church of England have, in the main, framed their theology, and fostered both their sectarianism and their divisions.

A LAY CHURCH, on the contrary, should it ever come into existence, must be founded simply on what may be termed SPIRITUAL AFFINITY, the *result* undoubtedly of common beliefs, but nothing more. The question at admission must be, *not*, "Do you *believe* as we do?" but, "Have you *sympathy* with the style of character which our beliefs, if genuine, necessarily produce? Can you with one heart and soul *pray* with us?"

It is easy to see, even at a glance, that this test, applied, not by others, but by each man to himself,

would at once unite all who love the same Lord, excepting in so far as men were under the influence of ecclesiasticism. The Jew would continue a Jew, and could not, therefore, honour Christ as Messiah. The Roman Catholic, remaining such, would not venture to ignore the mediation of a clergy. The Unitarian would refuse to join in the worship of the Redeemer, and sceptics of all schools would stand apart in contempt.

We quite admit that certain truths in Holy Scripture so commend themselves to the Christian consciousness of a renewed man, and are so identified with the Divine life, that he who rejects them does in fact reject the Gospel; that to a man who discards these truths the revelation of life in Christ cannot be called a Gospel, or good news: for how can he rejoice in that which he does not believe? But we hold that unbelief of this character invariably manifests itself in *the life*. We do not, of course, mean in the *outward* life, as involving morality or immorality, but in the inner life, as controlling a man's tastes, inclinations, and companionships; and that therefore it is utterly absurd—a direct contradiction in itself—to imagine that any man, disbelieving in the Divinity of Christ, and denying alike the depravity of human nature, the need of atonement, and the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit, should have *any real religious affinity* with those who regard these truths as lying at the basis of a truly Christian character; that he should *wish* to consort with them, or that he should even *profess*

anything which could be regarded by the world as identifying him with evangelical believers.

Such persons always did, and always will *exclude themselves* from the fellowship of the Church. The Apostles distinctly recognized this fact, and therefore never denied Church ordinances to any disciple because he was prone to speculate on things "hard to be understood," because he sometimes strove about "words to no profit," or was possibly open to the charge of "vain jangling." Even in such cases as those of "Hymeneus and Philetus," whose word "ate as doth a canker," and who had *actually overthrown* the faith of some, they are content simply to appeal to the witness of the Spirit (comp. 2 Pet. iii. 16; 2 Tim. ii. 14; 1 Tim. i. 6; and 2 Tim. ii. 19).

The fault of Christian men in the present day is, that they are too apt to assume the office of the Spirit of God; to insist that the reception of this or that truth is essential to salvation; to identify spiritual religion with questions belonging rather to the logical understanding than to the renewed heart; and to deny that any faith can be "sound or orthodox" which does not embrace a given circle of doctrine.

Surely something is to be learned from the fact that the Apostles *never* brought Church discipline to bear on any but on those who put away "a good conscience" before they made "shipwreck of their faith;" that the "heretic" whom Titus is directed, after two admonitions, to reject, is one who denied the necessity of good works,—one who, in so doing, was condemned

even of "himself;" and that the faith, without which "it is impossible to please God," is *trust in Him*,—a condition of the soul, and not the acceptance of any given theological formula (comp. 1 Tim. i. 19; 1 Cor. v. 5; Titus iii. 8—11).

It is because men trust in propositions, rather than in a person, that their faith is so weak. Faith *in a living God* is incompatible with want of courage, want of candour, untruthfulness, or fraud; but faith in any number of orthodox doctrines is, in itself, as we daily see, no protection whatever against the deceitfulness *of sin*."* Yet on belief in *doctrines* all Churches and sects alike, so far as we know, rest.

A LAY CHURCH, in distinction from these, *and because supplementary to existing Churches*, would be without a clergy, without a creed, and, except in relation to morals, without a discipline. Regarding right beliefs *not as ends*, but as means to an end, it would rely, both for its purity and for its unity, on the *results* of a sound faith as manifested in a Divine life, and in spiritual affinity with the Christian character.

The *second* question,—"Had not the Apostolic Churches their bishops and deacons?"—must at once be answered in the affirmative. The fact is undeniable; but attention may not unsuitably be called to the circumstance, that these inspectors and servants of the Church, whatever view may be taken regarding their particular functions, were specially endowed with gifts

* Appendix to the "Study of the Bible," on "The Great Want of the Age."

by the Apostles, which placed them *spiritually*, as teachers and rulers, in a different position from those to whom they ministered. Their endowments were such that it was both right and reasonable for their hearers to *bow* to their teaching, to "obey," and to "submit themselves," as to persons who were "over them in the Lord." Can *this kind* of obedience, we may fairly ask—except in a very inferior sense indeed—be claimed on behalf of any minister appointed by a patron, or elected by a people? The absurdity involved in such a supposition need scarcely be pointed out.

The *third* question respecting which we are called to furnish a reply, involves an inquiry as to the lawfulness or otherwise of deviating from Apostolic example, so far as to consider the idea of Church *separable* from that of clergy.

We might of course here fall back upon the ground that, as the lay Church of which we speak is supposed to be *supplementary* to, and not subversive of, existing ecclesiastical organizations, established or unestablished; as it would not be intended to interfere either with preaching or preachers; as it would leave sacred oratory and public worship, whether in churches or chapels, to those who have been duly trained to speak to crowds and to conduct the devotions of large assemblies,—it ought not to be regarded as in any degree opposed to Apostolic precedent. But this would scarcely be fair; for any lay organizations of the character supposed would doubtless claim to exercise a

right, hitherto supposed to be exclusively clerical, that of "breaking bread," or, as some would term it, of giving or taking the Holy Communion of the body and blood of Christ, without the intervention of either minister or deacon.

We meet the question, therefore, openly and in all its breadth, by affirming that *it is* lawful to deviate from the usages even of the Apostolic Church; that all Christians have avowedly done so; that to the New Testament we must look, not for fixed and unchangeable appointments, like those which belonged to the older economy, but for great principles, capable of adaptation to varying phases of society, to all peoples, and to every shade of civilization.

We might go farther still, and insist that as even the direct appointments of God have been set aside with the Divine approbation, when they ceased to answer the purposes for which they were originally ordained, so, if it could be shown that the Apostolic rule, that each Church should have its bishops and deacons, has, in the selater days, run to seed, and become productive of more evil than good, it would be quite lawful to overthrow such organizations as no longer desirable.

But this is not the question. No *desire* even is felt to overthrow anything. No one either wishes or aims to deal with the Church of England on the one hand, or with any Dissenting denomination on the other, as Hezekiah dealt with the brazen serpent, when, finding it had become an object of superstition, he broke it

up, and designated it a mere piece of brass (2 Kings xviii. 4).

The suggestion advanced is merely to *supplement that which exists,* just as the synagogues (when, or by whose authority, we know not) supplemented the service of the temple; just as Christianity itself for some years supplemented and formed the complement of Judaism. The earliest believers, acting under the guidance of Divine wisdom, did not forsake the temple so long as they were permitted to worship within its walls; and a lay Church, if rightly constituted, would, on the very same principle, adhere to the existing public provision for worship, unite in its services, and cheerfully and liberally support all true ministers of the Gospel, whether engaged as evangelists or as pastors of stated flocks. The only difference would be, that *higher motives* would be called into exercise than those which, as a rule, govern the contributions of seat-holders, or impel the liberality of the supporters of an "interest" or a sect.

But it is said,—"Has anything in the dealings of God with His people occurred, which should lead us to believe that it is either prudent or permissible to establish a Church without a clergy?" We reply at once in the affirmative.

What are all Nonconformist Churches in the eye of a consistent Anglican, but lay Churches? What are their ministers but laymen? *We* do not regard them in this character. We only wish it were possible to do so. Had such Churches and ministers been really

lay; had they been content to maintain themselves as supplementary rather than antagonistic to clerical Churches, we cannot but think they would have proved ten-fold more influential for good than they are at present. Instead of being divided into sects, they would have exhibited the TRUE UNITY of the redeemed family. Instead of being hindered and perplexed by the claims of property, by pecuniary needs, by rivalries from which secular interests cannot be separated, they would have manifested a DISINTERESTEDNESS of purpose,—a superiority to all meaner considerations than those which relate to love and truth—a freedom from the struggle for status, and reputation, and worldly good, which would have rendered them long before this the masters of public sentiment, and the salt of their country.

But it is idle to speak of what *might* have been. God overrules all things for the accomplishment of His purposes; and Dissent, with all its evils, has probably been the salvation of England—the bulwark of its Protestantism, and the breakwater appointed by Providence to stay that torrent of communism and infidelity which has overwhelmed other lands.

As a consequence, however, of the clericalism of Nonconformity, other and still more irregular developments have from time to time manifested themselves; and by these, with no tie save that of a common aim and a pecuniary subscription, Church work has been mainly done in all parts of the world.

What is the Bible Society? What are Missionary

Societies? What are Ragged School Unions and City Missions, but unacknowledged lay Churches, doing Church work—their outward bond, MONEY; their aim, the conversion and elevation of the world?

But does *money*, then, really bind together the supporters of these institutions? Is that which *appears* to be the prime mover of all their operations really so? By no means. They exist, they breathe, they grow, they move *only* in so far as they are really and truly Churches; only in so far as they are urged on by Christian love and united by Christian affinity. And so it comes to pass *as a fact* that if, in the absence of all Church organizations, of all tests, and of all discipline, the supporters of these institutions, without selection, were to meet together, to commune in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, either in small groups, or in large companies, they would form the purest worshipping Church in Christendom. There would be more light and life, more depth of devotion, and more consistency of conduct, than could be met with in any equal number of worshippers in any Church or country under the sun.

And *why* is it so? Simply because the DIVINE LIFE, wherever it exists, can neither be bound nor hid. Because the power of SPIRITUAL AFFINITY is stronger than any other power. Because the two (life and affinity) when united, invariably break through all obstacles, pierce any crusts by which they may happen to be surrounded, throw off, by the power of natural *repulsion*, everything that is not in sympathy with

themselves, and by an equally natural power of *attraction*, keep together all that is in reality one.

Probably no more striking example of the force of these powers can be quoted than that which is furnished by the history of the great society to which we have referred. In one sense the Bible Society, by its original constitution, could scarcely lay claim to a religious character. It was established simply for the circulation of a book; membership was to be gained only by a pecuniary subscription; and since the book, when distributed, was to be unaccompanied by note or comment, not Churchmen or Dissenters merely, but Jews, Roman Catholics, and Unitarians, were invited to unite in the work it had undertaken. We have ourselves heard Unitarian ministers advocate the claims of the institution side by side with evangelical clergymen and orthodox Dissenting ministers; and in the earlier periods of its history, Roman Catholic priests shared in its Continental labours.

But this did not last long. The power of Christian affinity, in spite of official efforts to interfere with its operations, soon overcame all other elements, and rendered union betwixt those who bow before the name of Christ and those who bow not,—between those who recognize and those who reject tradition *as an authority*, little more than a pretence, even in so simple a work as the circulation of a book.

One by one, sometimes in silence, and sometimes with ill-founded complaints, the unspiritual, however excellent and amiable in all social relations, voluntarily

withdrew themselves from union with those whose inner life did not correspond with their own.

If thus, by the necessity of the case, separation has taken place in a matter so simple as that of Bible distribution, how could it be otherwise in any association framed with a view to worship and communion. Never was there an error so fatal to growth as that which led the Evangelical Alliance, under clerical influence, to frame a creed, on adherence to which membership should be made to depend. Well and wisely did the late Dr. Chalmers observe, when consulted about this same doctrinal basis, "Dispense with a creed altogether: your *prayers* will be quite sufficient to attract those who are with you in heart, and to repel those who are not."

Whether A CHURCH framed on such a basis could properly be called anarchical must depend entirely on the views that are taken as to what is or is not spiritual anarchy. To the Churchman, Dissent is anarchy. To the Free Church Presbyterian, the Italian Protestant Churches are anarchical. To the rigid Independent, nothing can exceed the anarchy, disorder, and confusion of a gathering of Plymouth Brethren. But this is mere prejudice, as senseless and unfounded as the notion of the despot, that constitutional monarchy is the parent of revolution, or that "order" can only reign when tyranny has its foot on the neck of freedom.

The last objection to be noticed is that which bases itself on a belief that a lay Church must, if successful,

necessarily tend to root up and to destroy all existing ecclesiastical associations.

To this we reply,—It can only do so on the supposition that it is the will of God that the old should pass away. At present we see no evidence that such a termination is at hand. We are not among those who regard the Church of Christ as apostate, or its ministers as selfish hirelings. Bad men are to be found everywhere, for the tares and the wheat will grow together until the harvest. But this we will venture to say, that of the honourable, the devoted, the devout, and the self-sacrificing of this world, there are none more honourable, more devoted, more devout, or more self-sacrificing, than multitudes of those who at this time minister to the congregations of the Church of England, or among the various bodies of evangelical Nonconformists.

So long as this is the case, though Ephraim may continue to envy Judah, and Judah to vex Ephraim, the All-powerful and the All-pitiful will not withdraw His favour from either the one or the other, or cease to support them in the performance of the special work He has given each of them to do. A.

THE CLERICAL CHURCH.

THE Church of the Future! Will it ever exist? That is the first question. Is there any prospect, however distant, that mankind will one day review their ecclesiastical beliefs, and voluntarily emancipate themselves from a thraldom of which they are at present not conscious; a thraldom which, whether real or imaginary, is associated with their best interests and happiest moments, and into which they have been led, not by choice, but by the roll of centuries,—the ebbing and flowing of that great ocean of events, out of which everything around them has taken birth and shape?

No human being can answer that question with confidence; for to do so, it is necessary to know, not only what the history of the Church hitherto *has been*, but what, in the providence of God, it is yet destined to be; whether, in future years, it is, with all its imperfections, to pursue its triumphant march, conquering and to conquer, or whether it is once more to be shattered by persecution, and to be purified in the fires.

That great *political* changes are in progress, no thoughtful person can now doubt. That it is almost impossible to separate these changes from ecclesiastical interests is the opinion of every experienced politician. That Rome is tottering to its fall; that democracy, with tiger heart, already crouches, as if in the act of springing upon its victim; that events, before the coming shadow of which far-sighted men tremble, are now seen looming in the distance,—all these things are certain enough: but it is by no

means equally clear that the shock, come when it may, will materially affect institutions less obviously interwoven with the history of States than those of Rome, and still less free churches that disdain State patronage, and are therefore independent of Government control.

And yet experience has shown that, apart from all the outward accidents of condition, there is, in every country, a mysterious bond, uniting Church and State, which no legislative enactments can sever, and no expression of human will materially affect. For national life is the result, not of political arrangements merely, however wise or good they may be, but of all those varied influences which act upon the national mind, and give it force and character. Among these, none are so powerful as religious sentiments, which often altogether control a man's political views, and always, more or less, influence them.

That political opinions, in like manner, although with less force, react upon religious views, and eminently upon the modes and forms in which such religious views find public expression and development, is not less certain; and hence, it is not unreasonable to conclude that, whenever the long-talked-of "deluge" comes, and the fountains of the great deep are broken up;—whenever—to borrow a much more familiar, and not less expressive figure—European political institutions are subjected to the processes by which our ordinary roads are levelled and consolidated;—religious institutions, however free, may fall under the blows of the same hammer, and be broken into fragments by the same spirit of change.

But whether this be so or not, it seems impossible to suppose that when reverence for old political institutions is lost; when all that is sacred, by reason either of its an-

tiquity or its traditionary worth, is *turned inside out*, and mercilessly subjected to the bold and unsparing gaze of a multitude inflated by conceit, and excited by success,—religious institutions of any kind will escape scatheless. Rather may it be affirmed that, in *that* day—as in one infinitely greater—"the fire will try every man's work, of what sort it is."

One thing at least may safely be asserted, and that is, that the Church of the Future, like the Church of the Past, whatever form it may take, will be the result neither of discussion, nor of previous arrangement, but the fruit of events yet unknown and incapable of being foreseen.

Granting, for the sake of argument, that all clericalism is unscriptural; that Christians, if faithful to their Lord, would return at once to a lay eldership, and abandon for ever a ministerial *order;* granting, we say, all this,—who supposes that it will be done? Who imagines that any amount of *argument*, however unanswerable, would avail to overturn the prejudices, even if they be nothing more, that have, for fifteen hundred years at least, grown with the growth, and strengthened with the strength, of almost every Christian man? Who, with his senses in a healthy condition, really expects, that before any adverse *demonstration on paper*, were it capable of the highest mathematical proof, or as undeniable as the great facts of the physical universe, national establishments would break up; Episcopacy disappear; Presbyterianism melt away; or even Congregationalism vanish from the scene? Such convictions, followed by such consequences, are not in harmony with human nature. As reasonable would it be to expect the "Ethiopian" to "change his skin, or the leopard his spots."

Another thing, equally certain, is, that no great eccle-

siastical change will ever result from the formation of small communities of separatists, such as those which, on one pretext or other, from time to time break off from the great body of believers, meet apart, and, congratulating each other on their greater faithfulness, gradually subside into sectarianism. Useful, very useful, as witnesses to neglected or forgotten truths these bodies frequently are; but nothing as yet indicates that by *this* agency any great effect is likely to be produced upon the Church at large.

Of course it is easy, and, alas! not uncommon, to attribute the obstinate conservatism, which generally distinguishes religious bodies, to worldliness; to a sinful love of ease; to a desire that God and mammon may be combined; to anything, in short, that is bad, or base, or mean; or for parties thus charged, to retort on their opponents by accusations of lawlessness, personal ambition, and spiritual pride; but all such criminations and recriminations are not only wrong *in spirit*, they are, for the most part, thoroughly unjust. The differences in question are commonly the mere result of education and of hereditary prejudice; or, where these are not present, of those conflicting tendencies which, in all ages, have divided the educated portions of mankind into the two great parties of permanence and of progress.

But it does not hence follow that *nothing* can be done. It may be quite true, as we believe it is, that great changes in the Church will be accomplished, and only accomplished, by greater changes in the world—by violence, by storm, by the thunders and lightnings which commonly accompany the evolution of the Divine purposes; but it is not therefore either right or prudent for Christians to stand by unconcerned, or to feel that there is no work of *preparation* for them to do—no mission, like that of John the Baptist, for

them to accomplish; for the voice of God to mankind is in every age the same,—"Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight."

The preparation needed is both outward and inward—of the heart and of the head. It involves the learning of much, and the unlearning of more; chiefly, and primarily, the abandonment by all parties of the persuasion that truth in its entirety is theirs; that Apostles and Prophets lived and laboured on their platform; that the millennium will be but the multiplication of their forms and fellowships.

Will it be thought presumptuous, if we now venture to suggest the direction in which, as it appears to us, progress might be made?

I. First of all, then, might we not with advantage get rid of all admitted *unrealities* in matters of religion; whether they have *become* such by lapse of time, or whether they *never were real*, but mere exaggerations or perversions, which have had birth in times of excitement, or else compromises with evils then too powerful to be uprooted; but which, in either case, have been handed down from generation to generation, as forms of thought hallowed by long usage, and sustained by texts, into the true bearing of which, when viewed in their connexion, it has not been thought needful or perhaps safe to inquire?

How many of these are still clinging even to the simplest forms of Christianity, few probably imagine. How many linger in the purest confessions; blend with the noblest truths; and are announced to unsuspecting hearers as undoubted verities, in expositions both from the press and the pulpit, still fewer will, at first sight, be prepared to believe. How often Holy Scripture itself is, by the best of men, and with the most benevolent intentions—from long

and hereditary use, from careless habits, from timid acquiescence in reasonings *felt* to be unsound, and from a faithless dread of the entire truth—perverted, separated from its context, and used without discrimination, unlawfully and untruthfully, scarcely any person can conceive, whose attention has not been drawn to textual quotations, and to the principle, or rather want of principle, which is too often manifest in their presentation.

It is not too much to say that, were the words of any ordinary human writer used, or rather tortured, as those of Apostles and Prophets are, every day and hour, by men who regard these writings as inspired of God, universal reprobation would quickly punish the criminals, and, in so doing, to some extent at least, remedy the wrong.

II. Secondly, is it not possible to do much more than has ever yet been done, to place Holy Scripture on a pedestal higher and altogether distinct from that which is ordinarily claimed for scientific theology?

Perhaps the most important question of all those that the Church will have to decide in these latter days is *the province of reasoning* in theology. "The Westminster divines," says a recent advocate of things as they are, "have no difficulty in combining the supreme authority of revelation as the rule of faith, with the free exercise of reason in the interpretation of that rule, and in the deductions which naturally flow from it." For "the whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life," say these divines, "is either expressly set down in Scripture, or, by good and necessary consequence, may be deduced from Scripture." "Inferential theology," it is urged, "in this sense, and to this extent, may surely be admitted."

Now we deny utterly that *inferential* theology may in this, or in any other sense, *be admitted to a position*—for this is the real and only point at issue,—*which places it side by side with Holy Writ.* We deny the *authority* of any doctrine which can *only be deduced* from Scripture, and the right of any Church to demand belief in statements which are not "expressly set down therein."

It may indeed be said, as it has been, that "*logical inferences* from doctrines, or from the comparison of doctrines, *must*, in virtue of the great dialectical maxim, be true, if legitimately deduced from what is true," and that these at least may fairly be regarded as obligatory on belief. But who, it may be well asked, in reply, is to decide whether these logical deductions *are* legitimate or not, since they relate to subjects which are, for the most part, beyond the reach of human intelligence, involving at every step our feeble and finite conceptions of the infinite, the absolute, the unconditioned?

Again, it may be urged, that to exclude all such deductions from the range of creeds, and "to pronounce them incompetent and presumptuous, is virtually to interdict the exercise of our natural faculties on the truths which God has been pleased to reveal, and which He has left us to arrange and apply for our own guidance, without any formal or detailed directions, according to our ordinary laws of thought."

We simply reply, the question at issue is *not* whether or no the human mind may not lawfully and profitably be *employed* in comparing Scripture with Scripture,—for this no one doubts; nor yet, provided only that it be done modestly and legitimately, whether *logical inferences* may not be drawn from revealed truth; but whether such logical deduc-

tions, be they true or false, have any claim to rank with the actual revelations of Scripture, which they must do if made obligatory on belief; whether, in fact, they ought to be regarded in any other light than that of fallible human opinions, which may or may not be in accordance with the mind of God?

We maintain that they are nothing more. We maintain fearlessly that God has *not* left us to arrange and apply the truths of Scripture for ourselves, at least in any sense which can justify our demanding the consent of others to these deductions as parts of the Christian faith; for we are firmly persuaded, that there are no doctrinal developments of any importance, which have not been from the first drawn out and delivered on Divine authority for our acceptance. So long as we deny this, so long as we continue to indulge in what has been very justly termed EVANGELICAL RATIONALISM, it is impossible for us to complain, with any consistency, either of German neology or Romish development.

It is needless to say, that the same principle applies to all dreamy and fanciful interpretations of Scripture, ancient or modern, come from what quarter soever they may. E.

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The Interpreter.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints—as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention: but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine.*

BRITISH MUSEUM

REFORMATION.

A New Reformation! Is it needed? We think it is. We are quite sure that abundant evidence, if it were sought, might be presented to show that the need of *some change* for the better is felt both by Churchmen and Dissenters.

Mr. Isaac Taylor told us thirty years ago, that "indefinite misconceptions affecting the Divine character and government," and "certain modes of feeling

[Registered for transmission abroad.]

generated in evil days, and still uncorrected, exist, and operate to benumb the impulsive and expanding energies of the Gospel." And further, that we are bound to assume that our modern interpretation of Christianity, however good in the closet, is *unfit for conquest and triumph;*" bound to assume it, "as the only pious and becoming explication we can give of the almost universal ignorance and irreligion of mankind." (*Fanaticism.*)

The Rev. J. H. Hinton has had both the courage and candour to say to his brethren, "I will avow the fact, let it go for what it may, that *I regard the influence of the ministerial office as one of the greatest impediments to the successful preaching of the Gospel.* It is obvious that a professional ministry, as it is now extant, co-exists with a vast amount of individual inaction among the disciples of Jesus. It is the plea which is used to justify that inaction, and I believe it to be the sole parent of that inaction itself. Had there never been a professional ministry, there had never been an idle Church." (*Sermon at Bloomsbury.*)

The Rev. F. D. Maurice has more than once expressed his decided belief that certain parts of our popular theology are now driving intellectual men to popery on the one hand, or to infidelity on the other; and Sir James Stephen classes these views as among "the most effective of all the causes which are at present inducing among us that virtual abandonment of Christianity which assigns a mythic sense to almost every part of the sacred oracles."

The *Saturday Reviewers* say, "There is a gulf between the clerical mind, and the ordinary *male* mind, which is deep, and daily deepening. On the one side, it is a *pity* akin to contempt, *too apathetic to form itself into words;* on the other there are pious hands uplifted in meek spitefulness."

The *London Quarterly Review* (an ably conducted periodical, under the management of the Wesleyans) speaks, in its last number, of the pulpits of England being occupied by "*a vast throng* of 'impotent folk,' not only feeble for the time being, but incapable of ever becoming anything else." "The ministry," says this organ, "*is well nigh swamped* by meagre and unripe men, who might possibly have made indifferent tradesmen. These are elsewhere called '*a herd* of incompetent and indifferent men.'" "Never, perhaps," says the writer, "were the pulpits of this land held by men more faithful and true; but never also by men more unworthy." "*Ministerial popularity*, that goal towards which so many a young and ardent heart presses, —that reef upon which so many a misled life is wrecked, is among the most melancholy features of the Church of to-day." And then he divides popular preachers into four classes, the sentimental, the vulgar, the latitudinarian, and the flashy. (Oct. 1862, pp. 174—184.)

The *Christian Spectator* says, "In our time there is much reserve and dissimulation. *All who know religious society know that the people are greatly deluded as to the real opinions of their ministers.* There is a fear of the Jews which leads men to hide their profound

convictions, and temporize with the multitude. Silence, prevarication, compromise, false subscription, all these sins are common amongst us." (July, 1862.)

Following the orthodox, come the sceptics, who coolly tell us, that, "as a systematic whole, Christianity has passed away from us, and left us only *an inheritance out of its influence.*" (Hennel.)

Nor, if modern writers are to be credited, does the religious condition of the working classes indicate anything much better.

"The working classes! What is the tone and colour of their thoughts just now? Those who know could answer in a word,—MATERIAL. I believe that times of agitation, such as those of the days of Socialism or Chartism, are in some respects to be preferred to the present treacherous stillness. We have Atheism *in fact*, without the odium of the name; and just here lies the danger in the present temper of the public mind."

"We are not a Christian people. A superficial religiousness holds a formal sway chiefly over the middle classes of this country. Even to them it is little more than a convenient badge. But the people *en masse* have come to *smile*, both at religious teachers, and the system they represent. These things will scarcely be credited by those who live almost wholly in a religious atmosphere: Yet the dark broad fact oppresses us, and some, in almost frantic earnestness, labour to devise the means of amelioration." (*Preachers and Preaching: a Critique.*)

We will only add *as certain*, that whenever any form

of religion, deserted by the convictions of a people, yet retains their outward allegiance, it must before long reduce them, first to hypocrisy, and then to Atheism. Such we believe to be the imminent peril of religion at the present moment in England. It must be so, when the worldly interests of one class, and the social status of another, are endangered by the open avowal of principles which are, nevertheless, commonly held. The strong social pressure now brought to bear against *doubt*, can by no possibility issue otherwise than in extended insincerity.

In such a state of things as this, the necessity of a change of some kind can scarcely be denied.

What, then, is to be done? Are we to wait, as some would tell us, till political changes bring with them, as they usually do, corresponding changes of an ecclesiastical character? Alas! in vain shall we look for help to these "hills." All far-sighted men are now pretty well convinced that the political revolutions of the future are far more likely to enslave or to destroy religion than to emancipate or to improve it. *Our* age is not like that in which Luther lived. Our work is not like his. Everything indicates that the course of modern Church Reform will be, in many respects, diametrically opposite to the one which produced the Protestant Reformation.

That great era of the past *originated* with clergy, was *sustained* by learned professors of universities, fostered by kings and nobles, and formed part of the great intellectual movement of the age. *This*, the

coming one, will, in all probability, be initiated by the laity, be obliged to dispense with clergy, will have to decline high patronage even if it could be offered, and will *oppose* rather than harmonize with the public sentiment of its time.

The *earlier* Reformation awoke in thunders. The *later* must be looked for only in the "still small voice." The *first* swept over Europe as a storm, upturning kingdoms, and giving a new character to nations. The *last* must spread quietly and unperceived, like the leaven that was hid in the bushel of meal, until the whole was leavened. The *former* was advanced by ballad and song, by mysteries and dramas, by debates and discussions, by wars and fightings. The *latter* can grow only in silence and meditation, by prayer and fasting, by love and meekness. That of the *sixteenth* century was a revolt from grovelling superstitions, barefaced frauds, atheism in priests' garments, practical infidelity, and sacerdotal tyranny. *This* of the *nineteenth* can be little more than a deliverance from loved traditions and long-settled opinions, compatible with liberty, piety, and many and various fruits of the Christian life. Development, not destruction, must therefore be the motto of the coming reformation; love and truth its weapons; peace and unity its end and aim.

But *how* is the work to be accomplished, and through what stages must it proceed?

We have seen that, by the confession of some of our most devout and profound thinkers, it must be a *two-*

fold movement. It must embrace the reconstruction of our theology, as well as the reform of our ecclesiastical habits. It must to a great extent loosen itself from the past, that it may lay a firm hold on the future. Can it, then, be the act of a clergy, of "convocations," of "synods," of "conferences," of "unions," of "ministers," or of "deacons"? Clearly not. The *official* mind in Protestantism shrinks as sensitively from change as ever did the official mind in Romanism. A man like the late Mr. James, of Birmingham, may say, as he has done, that "it were well for us to consider whether our conservatism, routine, formalism, and dread of innovation, are not excessive, and do not stand in the way of our being blessed;" but he cannot get beyond "consideration," or suggest anything better than a greater use of the laity, "under pastoral direction, guidance, and *control*." It needs no prophetic gift to foresee how far any improvement of this character can go.

What, then, is to be done, and who is to do it?

We believe that most persons would reply that nothing *can* be done; that human infirmity clings, and ever will cling, to everything with which man has to do; that, after all, our institutions, although far from perfect, are probably as near to what they should be, as the nature of things will admit of; that the great point is to work them well; and that he is both the wisest and most useful member of the Church who turns away from all speculative considerations, declines to trouble either himself or others with dreams about

ideals which are not likely to be realized, and seeks only to fill up, in the best way he can, the niche appropriated to him by Providence. Souls, say such "practical men," are perishing around us,—go and warn them; the ignorant are on every side,—go and teach them; channels in which every form of doing good may find a course, abound,—work in some one of them; agencies innumerable are already established,—aid them by your prayers, by your money, and by your personal endeavours, and leave crotchets to the crotchety and the useless.

That there is a good deal of plausibility in all this cannot be denied; but there is also in it a good deal of self-satisfaction, indolence, and vanity. In the mouths of many, however, it is simply the language of *despair*. Sick of sects and separations; weary of pretensions to purity, which merely bolster up spiritual pride and exclusiveness; irritated by vagaries which build up nothing, it need excite no surprise that many wise and good men should become impatient in relation to everything which is not obviously and immediately useful. It can never be otherwise till Church reformers cease to be destructives, and are content to wait till the newer and the better, by natural growth, comes to displace that which is ready to pass away.

We have already seen that the laity can alone be looked to as *the initiators* of the future. And if we are again asked, what *they* can do, we reply, they can enlighten and *plant*. Let them silently and prayer-

fully, as the fruit of their own growth in the Divine life, enlighten their neighbours, and *plant* for the coming age, and they will not labour in vain.

We presume that we are now speaking to persons who, more or less, sympathize with the views we have been for the last three years endeavouring to open up. We think it not improbable that, during the whole of that time, we have had at least *two thousand* readers; and now we ask, is it too much to suppose that at least one-tenth, or two hundred of them, are prepared to *act*, if they could only see their way to do so efficiently?

We will suppose ourselves, then, to be addressing ONE of this two hundred,—a solitary individual, in humble circumstances, without influence, and surrounded only by unsympathizing acquaintances. We will suppose such an one to be at this moment proposing the question to us,—What can *I* do?

(1.) We reply, satisfy yourself that *God calls* you to this kind of service. Every man, however lowly his lot, has *his own work to do* in the world,—a work which none can do for him, and which none but God can teach him *how* to do. The greatest evil, perhaps, which arises out of our extensive associations is, that they too frequently merge the duty of *the individual*, in co-operation with the work of others.

If God intends you to be instrumental in purifying His Church, He will have led you to perceive without exaggeration, and to feel without bitterness, the character and bearing of the evils which now paralyze

its action. He will have given you the spirit of love and of a sound mind. He will have enabled you to *rise above*, without despising, the opinions of your fellow-Christians. He will have blessed you with the ability to discern the value and importance of movements which seem to have no immediate result. He will have made you willing to work patiently and lovingly,—with quiet tenacity of purpose and unflinching determination, for that which you deem to be right, unmoved by the misrepresentation, and unaffected by the discouragement you will be sure to receive from those who can neither understand your motives nor appreciate your aims. *If you are conscious that these qualities are in no degree yours, leave it to others to lay the foundation of a "Lay Church."*

(2.) Remember that the preparation needful cannot materially differ from that which is required for the work of the true missionary, whether at home or abroad. A life "hid with Christ in God"—a soul dwelling in "heavenly places," and redeemed from the pride and ambitions, the restlessness and conceit of the agitator and demagogue, is the first essential. *Without this failure is certain.*

Next must come, a thorough recognition of *the great purpose* for which God's Word was given, viz., "that *the man of God* might be *perfect*, throughly furnished unto all good works." Where this is felt, it will be studied, both alone and in company, in a very different spirit from that which commonly animates either the learned critic or the professional theologian; in a spirit

very different, too, from that which disposes so many to read only for impression or comfort. It will be read, not by the light of commentators, or under the limits either of Church or sect, but *as a whole;* by a light which is "dry," yet not cold; with a breadth which is, nevertheless, far from being latitudinarian; and with a faith and fearlessness which becomes the man who knows that he is listening to the voice of Divine inspiration.

(3.) Possessed with these views and aims, no man will long find himself alone. Affinities in thought and feeling will be discovered in quarters where, perhaps, they were least expected; and a fellowship will spring up, higher and closer than that of mere Church membership, dearer and purer than that which is formed by co-operation in any merely outward work, however excellent or important.

(4.) Leaving to others, and *without condemnation*, all agitations which, however needful in their way, are yet more or less political in character; rejecting all discussions which are intended to terminate either in the triumph of a party or the aggrandizement of a sect, it will be yours to act at once, and from a new stand-point, on the Christian man, *as such*, whether he be Churchman or Dissenter, Calvinist or Arminian, Baptist or Pædobaptist; to meet with him for prayer, for the study of Scripture, for inquiry into all truth, and for united effort in some plain and practical endeavour to render both temporal and spiritual

service to those who need it. For hints as to the mode in which, as we think, this might best be done, we can only refer to what we have already written. (See Appendix to "Study of the Bible.")

(5.) Time and Providence will develop the rest. Carefully guarding against isolation, by refusing to separate from any; diligently endeavouring, by loan of books,*

* By "*loan of books*" we mean, of *such books* as are intended and adapted to prepare the minds of Christians for a fresh and more useful study of Scripture. The difficulty of inducing people to *read thoughtfully* any book *of this character* in the present day, is inconceivable. And, what is worst of all, this *natural indisposition* to study the Bible earnestly and independently, is fostered by those Christians, and they are not few, who value Sectarianism more than souls, and who place ministerial influence on a higher platform than the authority of Christ.

The *London Quarterly Review*, from which we have already quoted, has a second article on "Bible Classes," in which we are told that, although the minister has "no special *immunity* from error, and no clerical *monopoly* of the blessings of the Bible;" since "there is no order of men to whom, *as an order of men*, God has given a right of *absolute control* over the Scriptures, or a guarantee of their *infallible* interpretation,—yet he is its *human guardian and expositor*. If not in other matters, in this, at least, he should be the highest human authority." The minister is to be "an interpreter and referee everywhere, and in all companies." "The *prerogative* of the minister is to teach; and the *privilege* of his class to be taught." "We confess our conviction," says the writer, "that the great thing to be desired is *more extensive ministerial influence* upon the mind, heart, and character of young people." "The free discussion of controverted points does more harm than good." "Exposition must have its *throne* in the pulpit."

Again: the "paramount spiritual authority" of ministers "must be maintained." In studying the Bible, "the way of duty is the way of

by conversation, and by communion, to *enlighten* all; "breaking bread" together wherever such a practice would not excite prejudice or discord; everywhere seeking to recognize the Divine life, and at all times maintaining that only *in the light of that life*—in the light of candour and charity, of obedience and devotion, can truth be perceived; you will find that, silently and unexpectedly, a feeling will be generated favourable to all good,—conservative of all that is really useful,—and tending to self-propagation with a rapidity and power that could never have been anticipated.

Out of a public opinion thus created, a true theology and a lay Church will inevitably spring. And there is this comfort in trying to lay the foundation of such a communion,—truth cannot fail to be greatly advanced

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danger; there is no such forlorn and miserable a journey as that of a young man's travels in this track *without* a *guide*. Of the Supreme Guide we will not speak here; but only of the human guide, who is *appointed to this end*. Let young men gather around their minister, and place themselves, in these matters at least, under his guidance. He may not always be such a guide as they would have chosen for themselves; but, *be he what he may, he was sent for this*, among other purposes, to give them directions in all things pertaining to the Bible."

We will not *contrast* these claims with the strange character given of the ministry in this same number of the *Review*; but we simply ask, *Wherein* does this *greed of power* over souls differ from that after which Popish priests hunger and thirst? What, under this teaching, becomes of the right of private judgment? To suppose that a religious public trained in this way will ever look into such a volume as "The Study of the Bible," unless it is forced upon their notice, is absurd. Again, therefore, we say, let those who desire to see the principles we advocate spread, *lend* and recommend the books in which they are embodied.

* *

by the very process of its formation. Unity, with or without oneness in opinion, will be felt as a necessity. Disinterestedness in promoting religion will find means of manifesting itself hitherto unknown. A higher standard of morality for Christians, *as such*, will as surely follow in its own time; and—which is best of all—the result will be arrived at (to borrow the words of Dr. Chalmers), "not by the working of one mighty organization for the achievement of great things, but by the accumulation of small things;" not by men whose minds range over the whole Church, but by men willing to work silently and patiently in the most obscure portions of it; and "the glory will be not the glory of any one man, or of any one association of men, but "it will be the glory of Him who sitteth above, and plieth His many millions of instruments" for the bringing about of His own blessed and all-embracing purposes. Surely it is reward enough for any of us to be permitted to be but one of these instruments, and to look for the sum total of good as the product of contributions far more valuable and important than our own. A.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

As some persons are apt to imagine it very unscriptural to receive the Lord's supper without the intervention of a minister, the following extract from a letter of the late Dr. Arnold to Sir Thomas Pasley may be useful:—

"Lay baptism was allowed by Hooker to be valid, and *no distinction can be drawn between one sacrament and the other.* That the Scriptures are clear enough against the priestcraft notion, is, to me, certain; the more so, that nothing is quoted *for it* but the words of St. Paul, 'The bread which we break, the cup which we bless;' words which, quoted as a text, look something to the quoter's purpose, because the ignorant reader may think that '*we*' means St. Paul and his brother apostles; but if any one from the *text* looks to this passage, he will find that the '*we*' is the whole Christian congregation, inasmuch as the words immediately following are, 'for we, being many, are one bread and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread' (1 Cor. x.). Yet this *text* I have both seen in books, and heard in conversation, quoted as a Scripture authority for the exclusive right of the clergy to administer the communion. Wherefore, I conclude, independently of my own knowledge of the New Testament, that such an argument as this would not have been used, if anything tolerable were to be had."—*Life and Correspondence*, 7th edition, pp. 391, 392.

THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE.

(*Continued and concluded.*)

ONE of the most important problems which the Church of the future will have to solve is certainly this,—What constitutes a Christian? or rather, Under what conditions are we warranted in admitting men to Church fellowship?

Two practical answers to his question have—in England, at least—for centuries been before the world,—the one, that which is furnished by the custom of the Church of England; the other, that which is given in the usages of seceders of different denominations.

By the first, the Church and the nation are so far identified that, in the conduct of public worship, as well as in the communion of the Supper, it is not found possible to draw any practical distinction between the sceptical and the believing, or—except in extraordinary cases—between the moral and the immoral.

By the second, a Church is regarded simply as a voluntary association of individual believers, who, from time to time, meet together for mutual communion and edification; and those only are recognized as truly belonging to it who, by a profession of faith in Christ, more or less public, and more or less in accordance with the peculiar sentiments of the Christian body with which they desire to be associated, avow their separation from the world, and their wish to be united with Christ's people.

Neither of these solutions, however, can we altogether

accept, because neither of them corresponds to the facts by which we are surrounded; for the first *practically* declares that all who are brought within the pale of the Church by baptism in infancy are, by that act, made Christians in a sense which renders any open separation from them in Church ordinances, on account of worldliness, or even flagrant sin, impossible, if not unnecessary; while the last regards every man who, in the judgment of his fellows, is unconverted, as an enemy of the truth, and, in the eye of God, worse than a heathen.

We say neither of these solutions corresponds to the facts; for, in a country like our own, and in every country where the Gospel has long been preached, the population must, if the division be a real one, be classed, *spiritually*, not under *two*, but at least under three distinct heads; comprising, *first*, those who are Christians *in name only*, such as avowed infidels, habitually immoral persons, and men and women so intensely of the earth and earthly—no matter in what shape—that they neither think nor care at all about a future world, rarely, if ever, frequenting public worship, or, if they do so, only for the sake of promoting earthly objects, such as that of gaining reputation or favour; *secondly*, those—a large body in every Christian land—who, in various degrees, and with every possible distinction of character, do, more or less, in the darkness or in the twilight of their souls, desire sincerely, though it may be very feebly, to serve God and eschew evil; men and women who, though they may often forget God in their hours of ease and prosperity, remember Him in sorrow and adversity, know and feel their dependence upon Him, and, amid weakness and folly which none but God would pardon, really endeavour to do right. Morally, as well as

intellectually, do such grope after God, "if haply they may find Him, although He be not far" from any one of them. *Thirdly*, those, be they many or few, who, in their own consciousness and in the opinion of their fellow-Christians, are renewed persons; men and women who have been "created anew in Christ Jesus,"—who live not unto themselves, but "unto Him who died for them,"—persons who fearlessly *recognize*, if they do not always act up to, a higher standard of moral conduct than others, and to whom, if to any upon earth, whatever may be their imperfections, such terms as "elect," "adopted," "sons," "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ," may be supposed to apply.

It is not difficult to see that for each of these *three* classes the Gospel contemplates a very different position and treatment.

Towards the *first* the Church has but one duty,—that of proclaiming to them, wherever they will listen—whether in the cathedral, in the barn, or by the hedge side—the good news of a full salvation, "without money and without price," by and through the Lord Jesus Christ. To rejoice that such persons take pews in our churches and chapels; to solicit and to receive their subscriptions towards the furtherance of the Gospel at home or abroad; to invite them to unite with us in prayer and praise; and to recognize them as Christians everywhere *except* at the table of the Lord—even if they are excluded there—is, to say the least of it, to encourage them in their unbelief, and to delude them as to their real condition.

For the benefit of the *second* class, perhaps no better course can be suggested than that which is now followed both by Churchmen and Dissenters in the ordinary public

services of religion; viz., such a blending of Christian worship and Christian instruction as is adapted to persons who, whatever their deficiencies, are sincerely desirous of *acknowledging* God, of confessing sin, of offering prayer and praise, and of growing in grace through the agency of the public ministry.

That such form *the bulk* of ordinary congregations, can scarcely be doubted; the poor, the afflicted, the aged, and the young, *all* to whom public worship is mainly public *instruction*, may, generally speaking, be ranked under this head. It is to these that the strength of a stated minister should be devoted; for they are in that state of spiritual weakness and dependence which renders help needful. These *require* and they profit by a minister's pastoral visits, by prayers in sickness and distress, by the innumerable services which he alone can render, and by instruction which, as a rule, they are unwilling to receive from any other. From these, a wise minister is always endeavouring to gather reinforcements for that higher and more spiritual body which we regard as the *third* section of a Christianized population, and the second of a Christian Church.

Of this inner circle of spiritual persons we propose now exclusively to speak. These, if any, are one in Christ Jesus —"one body," "one bread," one family in heaven and earth; and yet, strange to say, *here it is* precisely, amid this very circle, that all divisions, strifes, party spirit, jealousies, envyings, and such like, have their birth and being. The first class of a Christianized population—the ungodly—care for none of these things; the second understand but little about the merits, and simply follow leaders; the third—"the saints," "the elect," "the godly"—are the breeders of all strife, and the tearers of Christ's seamless robe.

And always, be it observed, on one pretext,—*that of purity:* in Established Churches, generally taking the form of adherence to traditions, such as those which relate to apostolic succession in the ministry, to the primitive appointment of diocesan bishops, or to official rights of one kind or other; and in various sects, justifying itself under the pretext of faithfulness to a particular doctrine, or rite, or primitive practice; but ever, as if by some diabolic agency, gathering around the great symbol of redeeming love and Christian unity, transforming it into a symbol of party and division.

That the present condition of this class in all Churches is somewhat anomalous, few, we think, will dispute. For first, without at all resigning their claim to the high titles given them, they voluntarily carry on their social worship in common with the ungodly and profane; they gather, sabbath by sabbath—and, indeed, regard their so doing as a great part of their religion—to listen to exhortations to repent, to explanations of the way of salvation through Christ, to teachings which ought to be as familiar to them as household words, habitually submitting themselves in this way to processes so debilitating, and to a pupilage so childlike, that after ten, twenty, or even thirty years of such training, they still often need to be instructed even as to the very first principles of the doctrine of Christ.

That this is the fact can scarcely be questioned; and it may well be asked, how can it ever be otherwise, so long as experienced Christians habitually lean on their ministers as much, nay, often more, than they did when they first began to discern the spirituality of the Gospel; when they shrink, with a sort of horror, from acknowledging, *by any practical act*, either themselves or their fellow-believers as priests to

God and to Christ; when, relying altogether on official expositions of Scripture from the pulpit or from the press, they rarely, if ever, grapple independently either with a truth or a difficulty; and when, as if conscious themselves of an amount of ignorance which is utterly inexcusable, they habitually scorn the idea of profiting by any study of Holy Writ which is not directed by a minister, or, *worse still*, which seems likely to disturb that passive acquiescence in accustomed forms of thought which lies at the root of what they regard as their spiritual consolations?

To remedy this evil is the great work of the Church in these latter days. Without a remedy for it, the Church of the Future will be as powerless as the Church of the Past.

That remedy will be found, as we believe, in the union of Christians for *two purposes* which can never, with impunity, be severed from each other,—mutual edification and mutual labour; a union which shall, in all its manifestations, be distinct from, and independent of, ministerial agency; which shall ignore altogether sectarian distinctions and differences of opinion on religious subjects; which shall be based, not upon a common creed, but upon common life and love; which will, therefore, be regarded by scientific theologians and sectarians of all descriptions with pious dread, as latitudinarian and base, but one over which angels will rejoice, and before which mistaken zeal, however fierce, will in process of time bow its head.

The chief difficulty lies in the inauguration of such a union, for it implies a revolution in thought and feeling. To suppose that Christian men, with all their professions of unity, would so far abandon their ecclesiastical prejudices and sectarian peculiarities as to meet, not in crowds merely, where recognition is impossible and sympathy vague and

general, but in smaller bodies, to pray, to praise, to study the Scriptures, to edify one another, to "break bread" as did the first disciples, and over the great symbol of Christian love and unity to project and to carry out plans of active benevolence for the promotion of piety and works of mercy in the different localities wherein they may assemble,—all this, we say, involves such an entire change in existing habits of thought and feeling, that it may well be regarded as utterly Utopian. But we do not despair, simply because nothing should be despaired of, that is obviously in accordance with the pattern showed us in Scripture, and the tendency of which is to advance the declared purposes of the Most High.

Were the ideas we have thus feebly shadowed out in any sense *destructive*,—did they tend simply to the breaking up of that which *is*, in the hope that out of the chaos and ruin by which we should then be surrounded something truer and better would find birth,—we should certainly expect, and as certainly justify, opposition. But it is not so. We do not desire to destroy anything, be it good or bad, that, however feebly, is doing God's work in the world, and, in degree at least, enjoying His blessing. We suggest simply that which is *supplementary;* that which develops itself naturally out of Christian life and growth; which would therefore strengthen all existing institutions, throw around them a higher because a more spiritual atmosphere, and every way improve the condition, lessen the toil, and satisfy the cravings of every true minister of Christ's holy Gospel.

The speculation would be a curious one, and perhaps not altogether unprofitable, were we to endeavour to imagine what would have been the state of England at this day, if the early Nonconformists (we speak of the laity), instead

of seceding from the Church of England, and attempting to supersede it by Presbyterianism, Independency, or any other form of Church government, had simply resolved to meet in numerous but small bodies for devotion and edification, under an elder or elders, sustained or not by the little community, as occasion might require, but in no wise assuming the clerical character, or seeking to be distinguished from their brethren by anything beyond greater wisdom, aptness to teach, or piety.

Suppose, further, that these primitive communities presented themselves alike to the world and to the dominant Church simply as *witnesses for* a purer and higher form of Christianity,—witnesses, not merely *against real or supposed evils*, which is an endless task, ending as it always must in witnessing against everybody, but witnessing only *for good*, that is to say, in favour only of a few clear and unquestionable truths, deemed, and rightly deemed, essential to the progress and purity of the Redeemer's kingdom.

Suppose, further still, that for such communion no condition had been required beyond that of a holy life, based on the honest admission of the Christian Scriptures as the only rule of faith and conduct,—all questions, whether relating to rites or doctrines, to baptism or pædobaptism, to Calvinism or Arminianism, to Episcopacy, Presbytery, or Congregationalism, being thoroughly and avowedly subordinated to high moral excellence; and supposing, finally, that the formation of distinct religious bodies or interests had been avoided, and persons wishing to commune had been admitted as freely to the Supper of the Lord as to the communion of prayer and praise;—suppose, we say, all this had been done, and the formation of sects, the establishment of rival Churches, and the erection of large and costly buildings

left undone, — what would have been the condition of England now? We do not profess to answer the question; we do not presume to say whether it would have led to *the extinction* or to the triumph of Puritanism, or to its modification under conflicting tendencies,—but we do say that the consideration of the subject might not be uninstructive.

The possibility of progress in the future in any such direction, — and in no other direction can progress be expected, if the coming age should prove to be, as is generally expected, one of scepticism and lawlessness,—will probably at length be found, *not* in the supersession or undermining of any existing form of Church government or order, good or bad; not in any work of destruction whatever; but in a more extended, united, and systematic effort for the spread of the Gospel than has yet been found practicable;—an effort made on primitive principles, not interfering with, but strictly supplementary to, institutions which already exist, yet involving in its progress the fearless recognition of lay agency, open communion, united worship, and the exaltation at every step of that which is moral and spiritual above that which is doctrinal or ritual. How such a movement can be undertaken will one day, without doubt, be a subject for consideration. E.

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FAREWELL.

WE cannot write this parting word without a feeling of something like sadness. We seem to be separating, at least for an indefinite period, from a multitude of friends, who are at once "unknown, and yet well known," were it only from the consciousness that, wherever they may be, or whatever their position, they are persons who have long listened to us with kindness and candour; who have borne with our

[Registered for transmission abroad.]

peculiarities; who have examined Scripture in our company; pondered our conclusions; and in fact, for three years shared in our mental and moral life. It would be unnatural were we not to experience sincere regret at being deprived of such a fellowship in thought and feeling.

Our position in the world has, from the first, been a very peculiar one. We have neither recorded intelligence, nor remarked on passing events. We have represented the opinions of no Church, or sect, or party in existence. Every line has been published anonymously, chiefly in order to avoid that appearance of presumption which the name of a layman attached to theological papers too often suggests; and we can conscientiously add, with absolute indifference as to success or failure in the propagation of any particular opinions, provided only that independent yet *serious and reverential inquiry* into the teaching of Holy Scripture were promoted.

The *history* of the undertaking may be told in few words.

"The Interpreter" was *planned* in Rome, amid scenes which deeply impressed the mind of the Editor with the manifold evils which spring from a religion of terror, relieved only by a religion of sacraments. Its publication was *commenced* under a settled and profound conviction that the dark shadow of the great apostacy still falls on the Churches of Christendom, misrepresenting God, and exalting man; narrowing the love of the Redeemer, and enlarging hell; making

much of a traditional creed, and little of a Divine life; associating religion with money, and sacrificing both unity and love to sectarian interests, to status, or to gain. It has been *carried on* in the hope that, by its means, seeds of thought, unable to find expression elsewhere, might take wing, and be carried by an all-controlling Providence to spots where, finding appropriate soil, they might take root, and by the Divine blessing bring forth good fruit.

To accomplish this end, the simplest means alone have been resorted to. The publication was announced in the ordinary method, but without the slightest attempt to force a circulation, or any desire to attract much attention. Not a single copy was given away, nor were any sent to newspapers, reviews, or other religious periodicals. It has consequently and happily escaped the notice of the supposed guardians of existing religious opinion.

Of each of the earlier numbers, above twelve hundred were purchased; and its circulation finally settled, after losing the support of those who became alarmed at its tendencies, or were otherwise disappointed in its character, at an average sale of seven hundred,—a number which, on the most moderate calculation, may fairly be supposed to imply two thousand readers. That it does so, may be gathered from the fact that the various numbers have been extensively *lent* by the purchasers, and that in several instances, little groups of young men, both lay and clerical, have not thought it unprofitable to meet together for the purpose of

discussing its statements, and testing their accuracy in the light of friendly criticism, accompanied by reference to Scripture.

From clergymen of the Church of England, some young, and others well known for services long since rendered to Evangelical Christianity; from intelligent laymen, and from readers on the Continent of Europe, in Canada, and in the backwoods of America,—all entire strangers to the Editor,—communications have been received, singularly proving how possible it now is for mind to communicate with kindred mind in all parts of the world, when it is the will of God that words should become "winged," and make their way to the few or the many with whom they may have a sort of mysterious affinity. Curious, also, is it to observe how such words seem to avoid persons who are not open to receive them, and by whom, if noticed, they would only be misunderstood or perverted.

In carrying the work on, care has been taken to adhere faithfully to the profession made in the prospectus, that "a truly independent interpretation of Scripture can only be arrived at by strict attention to the context, viewed in connection with the concurring testimony of other parts of the Sacred Writings, and irrespective of the opinions, however worthy of regard in their proper place, of the Fathers, the Reformers, the Puritans, or of any other school of theology; that Scripture, like nature, in order to be understood, must be *explored;* that this can only be done successfully by the humble inquirer, who enters upon the search

with no preconceived determinations of his own; who investigates with no foregone conclusion; and who is always ready, at the beck of truth, to cast down his dearest theory."

Great results were never anticipated. Discoveries were not expected. The blessing of inquiry was sought and has been found *in the search* for truth,* undertaken in the belief that neither any nor all of the various theological systems whose confused teachings have so long perplexed and divided the Church, have *exhausted* the Scriptures; that something is always left to reward the diligent student; and that it is a fatal mistake to suppose that humility forbids the attempt to work out *individual* convictions in presence of traditional authority, or in the face of formularies which are supposed to embody the highest and best *human* expressions of Divine truth.

That, under the conditions to which we have referred, so large a measure of success should have been attained, is an indication, too evident to be either overlooked or despised, that modes of thought in religion which satisfied our fathers, no longer meet the spiritual

* "If the accomplishment of philosophy," says Sir William Hamilton, "imply a cessation of discussion,—if the result of speculation be a paralysis of itself,—the consummation of knowledge is the condition of intellectual barbarism. Plato has profoundly defined man, '*the hunter of truth*;' for in this chase, as in others, the *pursuit* is all in all, the *success* comparatively nothing. 'Did the Almighty,' says Lessing, 'holding in His right hand *Truth*, and in His left, *Search after Truth*, deign to proffer me the one I might prefer; in all humility, but without hesitation, I should request *Search after Truth*.'" — *Goldwin Smith.*

necessities of their children; that old theological systems are preparing to pass away; and that it becomes every faithful follower of the Redeemer to do his part for *the preservation* of all doctrine that is essential to the formation and sustentation of the Divine life in the soul, while he is equally prepared to *give up*, without fear of consequences, all the accretions with which time and controversy have combined to surround the simple testimony of God. In theology as in war, a period comes when the shield on which the warrior once slept passes away as an incumbrance.

On the relation of the Gospel to the race, we have not said *all* that we intended. We had especially wished to have met the objection that a doctrine of future probation, either for the heathen or the ignorant, is contrary to certain express declarations of Scripture; that the expectation of pardon for any sin, after death, however limited, would tend to increase prevailing indifference to religion; that the admission of any other alternative than that of Heaven or Hell, would be fatal to missionary effort, and deprive preaching of much of its power.

These, and some other topics of a kindred character, can now only be treated in the volume about to be published, which will embody most of the papers that have already appeared in the "INTERPRETER" on this subject. Requesting our readers to promote, as far as they can, the circulation of the books which form the "INTERPRETER Series," we respectfully and cordially bid them FAREWELL! D.

CO-OPERATION.

WE have been asked this question,—"In what way can the *object* of the "INTERPRETER" be best promoted, when the publication itself is suspended?"

We reply, *mainly*, if not exclusively, by well-directed endeavours *to form a public opinion* in harmony with its spirit.

This will, perhaps, be most effectually done by the creation of what we will call, for the sake of distinction, PIONEER ASSOCIATIONS.

Let the two or three of our readers in any given town, village, or district, who believe that Prophecy and Providence alike teach that the time is approaching when "the mystery of iniquity" will pass away, and all existing ecclesiastical institutions, whether established or voluntary, undergo important changes; that a day is coming when Scripture, long darkened by traditional teaching, too frequently treated as *an exhausted mine*, and often perverted by well-meant but mischievous exaggerations, will at length be recognized in its true character, as a field rich in *unexplored* wealth, and consequently be searched afresh for its hidden treasures; when "a religious, zealous, and active laity," wearied with clerical strifes, interests, revilings, and recriminations, will, through some accom-

plished act, reach and realize what never would have been secured by ecclesiastical negotiations;" when "the inward life of the Church itself, the spiritual longings of the Church of Christ, will become so strong, active, and irresistible, that, without breaking down the form of the folds peculiar to particular portions of the whole," it will yet one day outstretch and overpress them all: we say,—let the two or three who anticipate such changes meet together, and, like Daniel under similar circumstances, "set their faces towards the Lord God," pray, and make confession for the people, and seek to understand, by study of THE BOOK, what it is the Divine will ere long to accomplish.

We do not ask such persons to accept *our conclusions*. God forbid! But we *do* ask them seriously to inquire,—

1. Whether, in reading the Scriptures and commentaries thereupon, they are careful to separate the revealed fact from the human inference,—accepting the one as authoritative truth, and putting aside the other to be weighed and judged according to its merits? Whether they habitually guard against perversions, accommodations, and exaggerations of the Word? Whether, in short, they bow to the traditions of men, or accept revelation as the only voice that is to be reverently listened to, and instantly obeyed?

2. Whether they are cherishing clear and scriptural views relative to the distinction made in the Bible between the gift of the Spirit as POWER,—a gift miraculously bestowed on prophets and apostles,—and

the gift of the Spirit as LIFE, imparted to all the true children of God? Whether, therefore, they are free from the poison which, in one school, reduces David to the level of Milton, and in another, places Paul in a position practically but little above that of "the fathers" or "the brethren" by whom he is interpreted? Whether they expect to "see light" in any other than "in God's light,"—the light of love, of candour, of open-hearted honesty, of truth, and of purity? Whether, in short, the work of "the Comforter" on the soul of man is understood or *mis*-understood, regarded or neglected, honoured or despised?

3. Whether they have ever reflected *deeply* on the extent to which God is *misrepresented* by theological conclusions, unauthorized by Scripture, which merge the Divine fatherhood in the judicial ruler of the universe, limit the work of the Redeemer in its practical effects, and give Satan the victory over Christ, by abandoning the race, as a whole, to the ruin he has brought upon it?

4. Whether they have ever *dwelt* on those portions of Scripture which speak of a dispensation yet to come (Ephes. i. 10); of a time of restitution (Acts iii. 21; Col. i. 20; Rev. xxi. 5); of a "crown" and a "prize," which some believers gain, and others lose; of a "priesthood" and "kingship," which imply both teaching and government in other states than this; of a salvation for the world, and a salvation special to the believing (1 Tim. iv. 10); consequently,

of a judgment for "the saved" as exact and as retributive as that appointed for "the lost"?

5. Whether they have ever *pondered* on the strange fact, that in an age distinguished for religious profession, for Christian activity, and for a world-wide philanthropy, the gulf which separates classes is still unbridged, and *the family character* of redeeming love is probably less understood than it was in days of comparative ignorance and irreligion?

6. Whether the great symbol of that love, *once* "a picklock to a place," *still* the badge of our divisions, and the barrier of our sects, is as yet rightly received amongst us, or whether its perversion is not one main cause why so much of our piety is powerless, and why, in spite of all our efforts, thousands upon thousands of professedly Christian people rot into worldliness, harden into selfishness, or shrink up into just nothing at all, for want of that social development,—that companionship, sympathy, and guidance, which it was the first care of the risen Saviour to provide?

These and kindred subjects might well form topics for meditation and conference, at once practical and exhaustless.

We say *practical*,—for nothing is more practical than THOUGHT, even though it should be long ere it fashions itself into any outward action. "Our minds," says Sir Benjamin Brodie, "are so constructed that we can keep the attention *fixed* on a particular object until we have, as it were, *looked all around it;* and

the mind that possesses this faculty in the greatest degree of perfection will take cognizance of relations of which another mind has no perception. It is *this*, much more than any difference in the abstract power of reasoning, which constitutes the vast difference that exists between the minds of different individuals; which distinguishes the far-sighted statesman from the shallow politician; the sagacious and accomplished general from the mere disciplinarian." Such also the history of the genius of discovery in science. "I keep the subject," said Sir Isaac Newton, "constantly before me, and *wait* until the first dawnings open by little and little into a full light."

Now this temper and habit is precisely what we want to see exercised in the study of the Bible; *attention* fixed on a particular subject, until it is viewed *all round*, and a patient waiting till light dawns.

To open this path—the high road to wisdom—*moral* qualities are, above all others, necessary. The mind must be calm, candid, unexcited, and loving; in contact with other minds, respectfully considerate of other men's views, yet retaining absolute independence; above all, free from the spirit of condemnation, isolation, and secession. If patience is not allowed to have her perfect work, nothing can be accomplished. If love is not supreme, the eye cannot be single; and if "the eye" be not "single," the "body" can never be "full of light." A.

RESULTS.

THE LETTERS we have already received in consequence of the "notice" inserted in our last number, enable us, without *committing* any one, to estimate—as far, at least, as is possible in such cases—the *results* of our three years' labour.

Without giving any opinion ourselves as to the value or otherwise of these communications, we propose, by a careful analysis of upwards of a hundred of them, to present to our readers the two general conclusions at which they have enabled us to arrive.

The *first* is, that our circulation has been all but exclusively among the evangelical and strictly orthodox members, clerical or lay, of existing religious communions. We have not, so far as we are aware, found even readers among persons who either seem to regard themselves as heretical in their opinions, or as belonging to what are sometimes termed, "advanced schools" in theology. Our correspondents, with scarcely an exception, are attached either to the Evangelical section of the Church of England, or to bodies of dissenters apparently as orthodox and devout.

This circumstance has surprised ourselves, as much as it will probably surprise others. Taken in connection with the high estimate of the value of the "INTERPRETER," and the anxious desire for its continuance expressed by the writers, it indicates clearly,—

(1) That among the most orthodox members of the

Christian Church there exists a deep and wide-spread dissatisfaction with modern theology, and a craving in various denominations after a liberty of thought which, checked and limited only by the direct teachings of the Word of God, may find expression without occasioning suspicion or alienation.

(2) A desire in public discourse for carefully-considered and well-balanced interpretation, rather than for declamatory appeal or address; a longing for exposition which shall dispense with exaggerations and perversions, and involve something better than the dilution or mere expansion of Scripture; which shall, in short, involve more of the revealed fact, and less of the human inference.

(3) An extended wish for a clearer and simpler, a calmer and more comprehensive teaching in relation to unfulfilled prophecy than is, as a rule, at present furnished either by millennarians on the one hand, or by their despisers on the other; and finally, such a *knitting together* of real and living Christians, without distinction of party, as shall *in itself*, without bitterness or separation, *testify against* ecclesiasticism, sectarianism, and infidelity, and *witness in favour of* a unity which can be made available as a force in the elevation of Christian character, by affording facilities for mutual warning, and for making a common preparation to meet changes which, whatever may be their character, are certainly approaching, and will probably prove eminently injurious to all whose hearts are set on the ambitions and successes of this present evil world.

Secondly, we think we have obtained abundant evidence in support of the opinion,—

(1) That freedom of thought in religion, even on matters usually regarded as settled, and involving, it may be, serious

divergence from what is usually known as Augustinian or Puritan theology, may be indulged without producing disregard for the spiritual interests of others, and without fostering a restless and sceptical spirit.

(2) That, on the contrary, such investigations, when conducted in a right temper of mind, tend to strengthen faith in all the great verities of the Gospel; to give freshness and reality to revealed truth; and to elevate Christian hopes, aims, and responsibilities.

(3) That it is impossible to make a greater mistake than to suppose that in religious matters acquiescence is equivalent to repose; that the cordial acceptance of a truth is, for all practical purposes, much the same thing as *faith in it*, founded on insight; that silence implies content; or that doubt is necessarily the precursor of confirmed scepticism.

Such are the conclusions to which we have been led by our three years' experience.

It now only remains for us to offer to *all* our "readers from the commencement;" to *the friend* especially, who, though unknown to any one connected with the publication of the "INTERPRETER," so "desires its continuance," that he "pledges himself to secure fifty subscribers;" to *the many* who, while "carefully guarding against being supposed to agree with every opinion that has been advanced," yet feel that our articles have been "a help to their faith," and "a source of consolation in distress;" to *those* who have regarded the publication as "of great value in suggesting thought, and in promoting freshness of research into the meaning of Scripture;" to those who "have waited and watched for successive numbers with unflagging interest;" to the *young men* who "have met together to discuss its statements,"

and who "think they have found in it a safeguard against universalism," and "a relief from painful doubt;" to one or two, at whose feet we would gladly sit, who have encouraged the periodical as "suggesting principles of interpretation highly favourable to unity in belief;" to the various clergymen and other ministers of the Gospel, both in England and Scotland, who have not despised our voice because it has been but as an unknown cry in the wilderness; and finally, to those who have frankly told us that "the one man" of the press is as objectionable as "the one man" in the pulpit, and faithfully warned us against what they deem our errors,—to each and all we render, in Christian sincerity, our best and warmest thanks.

E.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

CLERICUS E.—Should we see our way to the establishment of the kind of periodical we contemplate, we shall certainly propose to insert objections from correspondents, with brief replies. We should also have a Review department for books, but limited to such only as discuss the peculiar class of subjects in which we are interested.

B. (Scotland).—Your views are our own. Whatever enlargement or change may be desirable, "simplicity and *directness* of tendency must not be interfered with. Many thanks for your offer."

H.—It is very encouraging to find so many of those who differ from us in regard to some of our conclusions agree in the opinion that the INTERPRETER has been "a thoughtful, suggestive, and healthy publication."

T. (Warwick).—Your kind suggestions shall be borne in mind.

J. (Aberdeen).—Should we resume our editorial functions, we shall certainly communicate further. No friends are so valuable to the conductor of a periodical, as are those who promote its circulation.

G. (Cheltenham).—Anything but "discouragement" has led to the suspension we have announced. Our *sale* has, indeed, as compared with many other periodicals, been limited, but the *influence* of the publication has, to our minds, been very remarkable. At the same time, we feel the weight of the reasons advanced for greater variety.

A Party Man.—We are by no means insensible to the usefulness of party combinations, especially in the carrying out of practical objects; but we are deeply convinced that the mischief occasioned by sects and parties in religion is far greater than is ordinarily supposed. We fully agree with Archbishop Whately, that "there is nothing that more tends to deprave the moral sense than party, because it supplies that *sympathy* for which man has a natural craving. Party corrupts the conscience, by making almost all virtues flow, as it were, in *its own channel.* Zeal for truth becomes gradually zeal for the watchword—the shibboleth—of the party." No persons are more detested by party men than those who are of no party. "Candour is made to consist in putting the *best* construction on all that comes from one side, and the *worst* on all that does not." Whatever is wrong in any person or thing which has to be defended, is either boldly denied in the face of all evidence, or vindicated, or passed over in silence; and whatever is, or can be, brought to appear wrong in opponents, is readily credited, and brought forward, and exaggerated. Thus, "conscience is gradually so corrupted, that it becomes a guide to evil instead of good. The 'light that is in us becomes darkness.'"

X.—It is *possible* that two or three *years* may elapse before we shall be able to announce the successor of the Interpreter. We are far more afraid of precipitancy than of delay. In the mean time, we commit our cause to the "Pioneer Associations," simply reminding them that all great moral influences spread *silently;* that strength will be found in avoiding notice, and in shunning debate; that success is sure if our friends will but work quietly and unobtrusively, taking for their motto these words,—Pray, Meditate, and Wait. T.

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THE INTERPRETER.

NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS.

As we have received so many communications from different parts of the country expressing a hope that the INTERPRETER will, after an interval, be again carried on, and suggesting various improvements, we feel it right to endeavour to ascertain how far such a wish may extend. We shall, therefore, feel obliged if *all* our Subscribers who desire its continuance will have the goodness to furnish us with their names and addresses, that we may in due time communicate with them by circular as to future designs. All communications will be regarded as "confidential."

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